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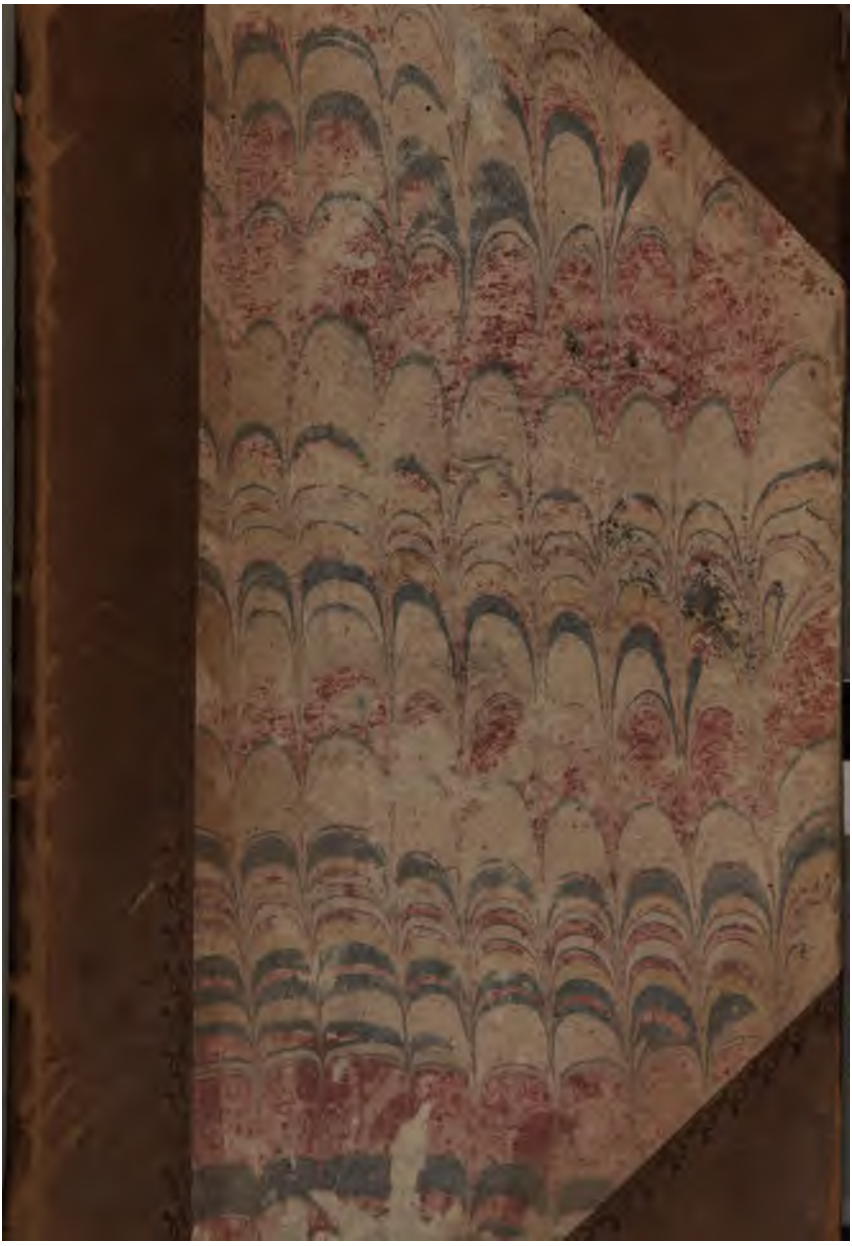

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MIRTH AND MORALITY:

A COLLECTION

OF

ORIGINAL TALES.

BY

CARLTON BRUCE.

THE HAMPER, P. 217.

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MIRTH AND MORALITY:

A COLLECTION OF

ORIGINAL, ENTERTAINING, AND INSTRUCTIVE

TALES.

EMBELLISHED WITH

TWENTY BEAUTIFUL CUTS,

FROM

DRAWINGS BY GEORGE CRUIKSHANKS.

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property was about to be divided among his relations. For this purpose the old house, the grounds round about it, and the furniture within, were disposed of, with the exception of a few trumpery articles, which were, really, too bad to be sold. The auctioneer agreed to give a trifle for this old lumber himself, determined, in his own mind, that he would contrive, by hook or by crook, to make his money of it.

No sooner was the sale over, than the auctioneer removed his lot of trumpery to a village, at a considerable distance from the place, and had a number of handbills printed to invite the attention of the ladies and gentlemen, farmers, and respectable people of the neighbourhood, to inspect an assortment of choice, valuable, and useful articles, well worth their attention, which he had to dispose of. The day for the auction was fixed, and the lumber of the auctioneer was placed in the great room at the Fighting Cocks, where it was to be sold.

How any man could have the impudence to offer such a heap of rubbish for sale, it is difficult to imagine; but the auctioneer was accustomed to such matters, and he had made up his mind to make a good bargain of his odds and ends. It was not possible to do this without telling many untruths, and deceiving his customers, but this he did not care a fig for. The day of the auction arrived, and as a sale was rather an unusual thing in the village, it produced quite a bustle in the neighbourhood, and drew together a great many people. Even the squire and his lady were there, but more out of curiosity, than because they wanted to buy. The lieutenant, on half pay, who lived in the white cottage, the farmers with their wives and daughters, and not a few of their labourers attended, as well as a score or more of the cottagers around.

When the large room at the Fighting Cocks was opened, and the company arrived, one after another, there was strange sneering

and joking at the odd lot of things placed all together. It is true there were a few articles of some value, which the auctioneer had sent in among the rest, but the principal things were hardly worth carrying away. Old tables, broken chairs, a chest of drawers, and a frying pan, two dish covers and a pepper box, a saddle and bridle, a large bunch of keys, and a set of cracked china, a copper teakettle, three books, a tobaccobox, a set of harness, a bootjack, and an old carpet, a painting, an ivory toothbrush, and a brass finger ring, brass fireirons, a straw hat, and a pair of lace ruffles; these things, and a hundred others, were placed together, but no man in his proper senses would have given twenty shillings for the lot.

A table at the other end of the room was well supplied with jugs of ale, glasses, and drinking cups, and the auctioneer made his appearance as the church clock struck twelve.

Perhaps there was not a man in the king-

dom who could trump up a readier tale about what he had to sell than Slingsby, and no man knew better than himself how much a glass of good ale disposes people to buy at an auction. No sooner did he enter the room than he began to push about the glasses and drinking cups, and most of the company, seeing that there was nothing that they should like to buy, thought themselves entitled to a glass of ale, at least, for their attendance. At last Slingsby mounted a chair, while his clerk sat down to the little round table below, to write down the names of the buyers, and the articles sold.

"Ladies and gentlemen," said Slingsby, "I feel happy in seeing myself surrounded by so highly respectable a company, and I have no doubt but the result of this day's sale will show that your taste and judgment are equal to your great respectability. I shall first offer to your notice a few superior articles, after which I will proceed to explain what is necessary to be known, before you

can put a proper value on the various things I shall have the honour to submit to your inspection."

Here a few articles of good quality were readily disposed of, and most of the company would now have taken their leave, laughing at the lumber left unsold, but the ale, and that holiday feeling which an auction usually excites, induced them to stay. However worthless the trumpery articles might be in the opinion of all present before Slingsby the auctioneer had spoken about them, certain it is that they appeared to possess some value after he had delivered his oration.

"Ladies and gentlemen," said he, rubbing his hands, and bowing first on one side and then on the other, "If I did not know that the respectable individuals whom I now address were fully capable of judging of the real merits of what I have to offer, I should feel reluctance in putting up for sale the very ancient, rare, curious, and valuable

articles which I have been fortunate enough to amass together. Ladies and gentlemen, the various curiosities before you derive their value from the circumstance of their having been in the possession of distinguished persons, and I am sure that you will estimate them on that account. A good son will value what belonged to his father; an affectionate daughter will prize what was once possessed by her mother, and a patriotic Englishman will ever hold dear the veriest trifle which has descended from those illustrious characters who have upheld the glory of old England. I am certain, then, that you will be anxious to avail yourselves of the present opportunity to secure some memorial of departed greatness.

"If you look at that bootjack, it may appear worthless, but what will you say when I tell you that it belonged to one of the bold barons who compelled king John to sign Magna Charta? Where is the Briton who can look back to a long line of ancestors,

who values his rights, and suffers them not to be trampled under foot, who would not be proud to possess that bootjack ?"

Here the squire stood up at least an inch higher than before, and the auctioneer saw at a glance who would be the purchaser of the bootjack.

"Look at these three old volumes," continued Slingsby, "many a huckster would tear them to pieces to wrap up pennyworths of butter, but the scholar will feel a noble emulation to possess books which were once the property of Wickliffe, the pious reformer."

The schoolmaster gave a hem of importance which did not escape the ear of Slingsby, who thus went on:

"Regard that rusty and scabbardless sword, which would scarcely be picked up by the common observer. Is there one here who has

bravely served his country whose blood does not rise in his veins to possess the sword of the great Duke of Marlborough?"

The commanding glance, and flushed countenance of the lieutenant told Slingsby that he need look no further for a purchaser of the rusty sword. "And you who follow the plough, on whose useful and honourable exertions we are dependent for the bread we eat, you the agriculturalists of old England, will you let that old ploughshare be bought by those who know not how to value it, when I inform you that it won the best ploughing match that was ever contested in old England?"

Slingsby saw a dozen purchasers for his old rusty ploughshare in the farmers around, who were to a man determined to possess it.

"You must allow me," said Slingsby, "before I put up any of these real curiosities which would adorn the British Museum itself,

to point out a few more of them, that you may suit your several tastes in the purchases about to be made."

Here the squire, and one or two others, having an appointment, were obliged to leave, after giving instructions what articles they wished to be bought for them.

The auctioneer then went on: "The old broom which you see in the corner was once carried at the mast head of the flag ship of the Dutch Admiral Van Tromp, to show that he could sweep his enemies from the seas, but since then British seamen and British hearts of oak have swept the seas themselves, without troubling the Dutch to do it for them."

Mullins the malster's man had been in the navy, and he determined, if it took his last shilling, he would buy the broom.

"The pair of pistols," said Slingsby, "were

once the property of the celebrated Turpin the highwayman, and the old lantern was the identical one which Guy Fawkes had in his hand when detected in the cellar under the parliament house, in the conspiracy of gunpowder plot.

"I ought to beg pardon of the ladies for not having before this mentioned a few articles which will no doubt interest them. The pair of lace ruffles were worn by the unfortunate queen of France, who suffered on the scaffold, as well as her equally unfortunate husband Louis the Sixteenth.

"That chest of drawers I will venture to recommend to your especial notice, it once ornamented, old fashioned as it is, the dressing room of the beautiful Lady Louisa Amelia Seraphina Debora Dumps!" Who this beautiful lady was the auctioneer knew no more than the company around him, but the information he gave had a very visible effect

on the churchwarden's wife and the grocer's daughter.

"The pair of iron spurs," said Slingsby, "might, for ought I know, have belonged to William the Conqueror, but that fine old portrait of Lady Jane Grey will be a prize to any one who can purchase it. That bunch of keys, there, was found on the notorious Jack Shepherd, whose life and death are recorded in the Newgate Calender, and the tobacco box was carried in the waistcoat pocket of the justly celebrated Sir Walter Raleigh, who, as you all know, first introduced tobacco into this country.

"Look at that broken salt box, a noble relic! it belonged to John Bunyan, the author of the Pilgrim's Progress; who is there that has read that celebrated work who would let the salt box go without a bidding?"

Mrs. Turton, the mother of the parish

clerk, here put her hand into her pocket and kept fumbling about for some time.

"I have been told," continued Slingsby, taking up a ring, "that this was worn on the forefinger of the Emperor of China, Kien Long, but I am not quite certain of the fact; the diamond, if it be one, is a little dim, but that cannot be helped, I must dispose of it just as it is, and the purchaser may have it fresh cut and set again. The white hat, with the high crown, once defended the head of old Jenkins, who lived longer than any Englishman that ever I heard of. But, ladies and gentlemen, time is wearing away, I will therefore only draw your attention to another article, and then put up for sale the very valuable collection which with great pains, perseverance, and expense, I have succeeded in getting together. The set of broken china came from Potsdam, and was made expressly for the use of Frederick the Great, King of Prussia. I understand that three china manufacturers purpose at-

tending the sale to purchase it, on account of its exquisite workmanship; but as they are not here, it will be better to put it by for an hour or two, if agreeable to the company."

Here two female voices were heard to say that it would be very unfair to put by the china, and that they would certainly leave the room if it was not put up directly for sale.

The auction began in good earnest. The china was bought by the squire's lady. The chest of drawers, once the property of the beautiful Lady Louisa Amelia Seraphina Deborah Dumps, was knocked down to the churchwarden's wife. The bootjack was bought in with other things for the squire. Farmer Roughhead bid bravely for the ploughshare; and the schoolmaster walked away, as upright as a maypole, with the volumes of Wickliffe under his arm. Mullins the malster's man had the old broom, and

the lieutenant the rusty sword. The pistols were bought by the gamekeeper, and the hostler of the Fighting Cocks was the purchaser of Guy Fawkes's lantern.

The grocer's daughter was mortified in losing the chest of drawers, but she secured the lace ruffles. The iron spurs fell to Robert the grazier, the bunch of keys to the pedler, and the tobacco box was bought by old Tom Slater who had been a chewer of tobacco for forty years. The salt box was not worth so many pence as Mrs. Turton gave shillings to obtain it. The ring of the emperor of China was bought and fully paid for by Miss Barbara Tibbets. The white hat was carried off by Jonas Parkenson, the oldest man in the parish; and Slingsby the auctioneer declared, on his honour, that he had never witnessed more taste, judgment, and patriotism in any company in the whole course of his life.

"Well," said Jasper Wigley the fisherman,

a shrewd old man who had been laughing in his sleeve the whole of the time, at the folly of the buyers, "well," said he, as he walked away with a neighbour of his, "if we have not learned a lesson to day, it is our own fault. If I wanted to catch one simpleton, I would hook him with a bribe: if I wished to catch twenty, I would net them with promises; but if I desired to catch a hundred, I would poison them with flattery."

ELM TREE HALL.

I love to tell a cheerful tale
In happy-hearted mood;
Come, read it with a willing mind,
For it may do thee good!

About twenty years ago there lived a singular gentleman in the old Hall among the Elm Trees. He was about three score years

of age, very rich, and somewhat odd in many of his habits, but for generosity and benevolence he had no equal.

His dress was as old fashioned as his habits. He wore a cocked hat, richly embroidered, a waistcoat reaching nearly to his knees, and his shoes came up almost to his ancles. No poor cottager stood in need of comforts which he was not ready to supply, no sick man or woman languished for want of his assistance, and not even a beggar, unless a known impostor, went empty handed from the Hall.

> The sick he sooth'd, the hungry fed,
> Bade care and sorrow fly,
> And loved to raise the downcast head
> Of friendless poverty.

Now it happened that the old gentleman wanted a boy to wait upon him at table, and to attend to him in different ways, for he was very fond of young people. But much as

he liked the society of the young, he had a great aversion to that curiosity in which many young people are apt to indulge. He used to say, "The boy who will peep into a drawer will be tempted to take something out of it, and he who will steal a penny in his youth will steal a pound in his manhood."

This disposition to repress evil, as well as to encourage good conduct, formed a part of his character, for though of a cheerful temper, and not given to severity, he never would pass over a fault till it was acknowledged and repented of.

No sooner was it known that the old gentleman was in want of a servant, than twenty applications were made for the situation; but had there been forty, no one would have been engaged until he had undergone a trial, for a boy with a curious, prying disposition the old gentleman would

not engage. It was on a Monday morning that seven lads, drest in their Sunday clothes, with faces as bright as cherry-cheeked apples, made their appearance at the Hall, each of them desirous to obtain the situation they applied for. Now the old gentleman, being of a singular disposition, had prepared a room in such a way that, if any of the young people who applied to be his servant were given to meddle unnecessarily with things around them, or to peep into cupboards and drawers, he might be aware of it, and he took care that the lads, who were then at Elm Tree Hall, should be shown into this room one after another.

And first Joe Turner was sent into the room, and told that he would have to wait a little; so Joe sat down on a chair near the door. For some time he was very quiet, and looked about him, but there seemed to be so many curious things in the room that, at last, he got up to peep at them.

On the table was placed a dish cover, and Joe wanted sadly to know what was under it, but he felt afraid of lifting it up. Bad habits are strong things, and as Joe was of a curious disposition he could not withstand the temptation of taking one peep; so he lifted up the cover.

This turned out to be a sad affair; for under the dish cover was a heap of very light feathers; part of the feathers, drawn up by the current of air, flew about the room, and Joe, in his fright, putting down the cover hastily puffed the rest of them off the table.

What was to be done? Joe began to pick up the feathers, one by one; but the old gentleman, who was in an adjoining room, hearing a scuffle, and guessing the cause of it, entered the room to the consternation of Joe Turner, who was very soon dismissed as a lad not at all likely to suit the situation.

When the room was once more arranged, Tom Hawker was placed there until such time as he should be sent for; no sooner was he left to himself, than his attention was attracted by a plate of fine ripe cherries, now Tom was uncommonly fond of cherries, and he thought that it would be impossible to miss one cherry among so many. He looked and longed, and longed and looked for some time, and just as he had got off his seat to take one, he heard, as he thought, a foot coming to the door; but no, it was a false alarm. Taking fresh courage, he went cautiously and took a very fine cherry, for he was determined to take but one, and put it in his mouth. It was excellent, and then he persuaded himself that he ran no great risk in taking another; this he did, and hastily popped it in his mouth.

Now the old gentleman had placed a few artificial cherries at the top of the others filled with cayenne pepper, one of these Tom

had unfortunately taken, and no sooner did he put it in his mouth than he began to sputter in such an outrageous manner, that the old gentleman knew very well what was the matter. Tom Hawker was sent about his business without delay, with his mouth almost as hot as if he had put a burning coal in it.

Bill Parkes was next introduced into the room, and left to himself, but he had not been there two minutes, before he began to move from one place to another. He was of a bold, resolute temper, but not over-burdened with principle; for if he could have opened every cupboard, closet, and drawer in the house, without being found out, he would have done it directly. Having looked round the room, he noticed a drawer to the table, and made up his mind to peep therein, but no sooner did he lay hold of the drawer knob than he set a large bell ringing which was concealed under the table. The old

gentleman immediately answered the summons, and entered the room. Bill Parkes was so startled by the sudden ringing of the bell, that all his impudence could not support him: he looked as though any one might knock him down with a feather. The old gentleman asked him if he had rung the bell because he wanted any thing? Bill stuttered and stammered, but all to no purpose, for it did not prevent his being ordered off the premises.

Sam Tonks was then shown into the room, by an old servant, and, being of a cautious disposition, touched nothing, but only looked at the things about him. At last he saw that a closet door was a little open, and thinking it would be impossible for any one to know that he had opened it a little more, he very cautiously opened it an inch further, looking down at the bottom of the door that it might not catch against any thing and make a noise. Now had he

looked at the top, instead of the bottom, it might have been better for him, for to the top of the door was fastened a plug which filled up the hole of a small barrel of shot. Sam ventured to open the door another inch, and then another, till the plug being pulled out of the barrel, the leaden shot began to pour out at a strange rate; at the bottom of the closet was placed a tin pan, and the shot falling upon this pan made such a clatter that Sam Tonks was half frightened out of his senses.

The old gentleman soon came into the room to inquire what was the matter, and there he found Sam Tonks nearly as pale as a sheet. Sam had opened one door, the old gentleman soon opened another, bidding him walk out of it, and never again to show his face at Elm Tree Hall.

It now came to the turn of Ned Roberts to be put into the room, and as it was in a

distant part of the house, he knew nothing of what had happened to the other lads.

On the table stood a small round box with a screw top to it, and Ned, thinking that it contained something curious, could not be easy without unscrewing the top, but no sooner did he do this, than out bounced an artificial snake, full a yard long, and fell upon his arm. Ned started back and uttered a scream, which brought the old gentleman to his elbow. There stood Ned with the bottom of the box in one hand, the top in the other, and the snake on the ground. "Come, come," said the old gentleman, handing him out of the room, "one snake is quite enough to have in the house at a time, therefore the sooner you are gone the better;" with that he dismissed him, without waiting a moment for his reply.

Harry Ball next entered the room, and, being left alone, soon began to amuse him-

self in looking at the curiosities around him. Ball was not only curious and prying, but downright dishonest, and observing that the key was left in the drawer of a bookcase he stepped on tiptoe in that direction, but the moment he touched the key he fell flat on the floor. The key had a wire fastened to it which communicated with an electrifying machine, and Harry received such a shock as he was not likely to forget. No sooner did he sufficiently recover himself to walk, than he was told to walk off the premises, and leave other people to lock and unlock their own drawers.

The last boy was John Grove, and though he was left in the room full twenty minutes, he never during that time stirred from his chair. John had eyes in his head as well as the rest of them, but he had more integrity in his heart, neither the dish cover, the cherries, the drawer knob, the closet door, the round box, nor the key, tempted him to

rise from his seat, and the consequence was that, in half an hour after, he was engaged in the service of the old gentleman at Elm Tree Hall.

John Grove followed his good old Master to his grave, and received a legacy of fifty pounds for his upright conduct in his service. Read this, ye busy, meddling, peeping, pilfering young people, and imitate the example of John Grove.

THE MAD DOG.

Wouldst thou inflict no needless pain,
And do thy fellow man no wrong,
With prudent, kindly care, restrain
The poison of a slanderous tongue.

THE sun was blazing in the sky, the cattle were hanging their heads beneath the shade of the oak trees, the horses were shaking their ears and swinging their long tails from

side to keep off the flies, myriads of gnats were rising and falling in their sport at the corner of the thatched hovel, and the pool by the old yew tree was almost dry. It was indeed one of the hottest summers that had been known in the memory of man.

> The sow lay deep in a miry bed,
> The sheep lay panting on the ground,
> And man and bird and beast had fled
> From the burning heat that reign'd around.

Wellings the wheelwright, and Sherrad the Shoemaker, were sitting in the shade at the door of the Malt Shovel, with a pot of porter before them; and old Norbury the blacksmith was hastily hammering away at his anvil, that he might finish the job in which he was engaged and join his neighbours at the door of the Malt Shovel.

Jenny Stephens was sitting on the step at her door knitting a white worsted stocking, and now and then looking on her chubby-cheeked little girl, rolling on the grass; and

the magpie, in the wicker cage, was hopping down from his perch and up again; when a noise was heard at the other end of the village. The hubbub increased, and half a dozen people were seen running towards the Malt Shovel armed with different weapons. As they came nearer their voices were distinctly heard crying out, "A mad dog! a mad dog!" Jenny Stephens threw down her knitting, and snatched up her child. Wellings and Sherrad seized hold of a mop and a besom which stood near the brewhouse; and old Norbury ran out of his smithy, in his leathern apron, with a red hot iron in his hand.

A dog was now seen running with his tongue hanging out of his mouth, a dozen lads, too, who had been distanced in the chase now came in sight, bawling, and squalling, and following the men and the dog. The whole village was in a riot, but as soon as the dog was seen running foaming at his

mouth, every one tried to get out of his way. Old Nanny Flemming the washerwoman, with her fat sides, waddled screaming into the house of her next neighbour. Tippen the tailor's apprentice, who was sitting on the shopboard with the window open, leaped up as suddenly as if he had been shot; and Mary Stokes at the huckster's, as she poured out some treacle into a basin, let fall the treacle can, broke the basin, and fled into the brewhouse, half frightened out of her senses; while men, women, and children joined in the cry, "A mad dog! a mad dog!"

Just as the dog came up Sam Broughton, the butcher, had reached a leg of mutton from a hook at his shop door. Kitty Mullens was standing with a pail of water on her head; and the churchwarden came up trotting along on his brown pony. No sooner did the cry of mad dog reach them than Sam dropped the leg of mutton on the ground. Kitty Mullens overturned her pail

of water, and the churchwarden clapping his heels to the sides of his brown pony set off on a gallop up the green lane.

And now away went the dog with twenty people at his heels. Wellins with a mop, Sherrod with a besom, and old Norbury, with the iron he had been welding in his hand, joined in the chase. The tailor's apprentice seized hold of his master's yard, and Sam Boughton snatched up the cleaver to hasten after the motley throng, while the cry rose higher than before, "A mad dog! a mad dog!"

Never sure was such a confusion known, The dog followed the churchwarden, and the throng followed the dog, running, panting, and shouting loud enough to raise the whole parish; wherever they went, the hubbub increased, women were bawling, children squalling, men shouting, and dogs barking.

When the dog had got to the old yew tree,

he ran up the narrow lane leading to Benson's barn, followed hard by his pursuers; but unluckily the gate at the top was shut, and the bars were too close for the dog to get through, so he turned suddenly back again and put his tormentors to the rout. Old Norbury was behind, but in turning round his long leathern apron got between his legs and threw him down, Boughton tumbled over him, Wellings and Sherrod fell over the butcher, and the tailor's apprentice leaped into the old sawpit by the side of the lane.

For a moment all was consternation and dismay, but no sooner did they find themselves unbitten by the dog than the wheelwright and the shoemaker rose from the ground, the butcher picked up his cleaver, the blacksmith his bar of iron, and the tailor's apprentice crept out of the sawpit.

And now again the dog was seen running with as many people after him as before,

panting, puffing, and shouting as loud as they could bawl, "A mad dog! a mad dog!"

> And clamour and confusion rung
> The peaceful lanes and fields among.

The dog passed near the school on the hill, and the boys, being at play, sallied forth, in a band, to join the chase. Farmer Brown was talking to some of his men when the dog crossed a field of clover near the house, the farmer ran into the house for his gun, the shepherd laid hold of a hay fork, and the cowlad picked up a brick end. The dog was almost exhausted, the sun was hotter than ever, the butcher with his red face was out of breath, and old Norbury the blacksmith was full fifty yards behind. The cowlad threw his brickend at the dog and knocked him head over heels, the farmer fired but missed him, the shepherd ran forwards with his hay fork, but the dog crept through a hole in the hedge, rolled down the steep bank into Stone Quarry Lane, and slowly padded along towards Pike Pool.

None but the farmer, the shepherd, and the cowlad were able to keep near the dog, which was at last killed by the shepherd, who knocked him on the head just as he scrambled up a sand bank.

Thus ended the hubbub and confusion, the running, the panting, the bawling, the squalling, and the clamorous cry of "A mad dog! a mad dog!" the boys returned to school, and the throng moved slowly back towards the village in triumph.

The farmer led the way with his gun in his hand, the shepherd shouldered his hay fork, the wheelwright and shoemaker carried their mop and besom, the butcher bore his cleaver, and the blacksmith his iron bar.

When they arrived at the Malt Shovel, Perrins the village schoolmaster was standing under the trees at the door talking with the exciseman. Perrins was a spare, thin man, about fifty years of age, dressed in a thread-

bare suit of black cloth; meekness and intelligence might be read in his face, nor was there one in the whole village who did not respect him,

> He was a man who, upright in his ways,
> Had lived in happier times, and better days,
> And was, by all the rustics round, confest,
> Of village schoolmasters to be the best.

When the Farmer and the rest of the throng sat down on the benches under the trees and began to boast of killing the dog, "My good neighbours," said Perrins, "I am afraid that you have not so much to boast of as you imagine; you have killed the dog, it is true, but the dog was no more mad than I am."

Just as he said this, old Norbury was lifting a pot of porter to his lips, for the chase after the dog, and the hot, broiling sun had sadly parched him, but he lowered the pot to reply to the schoolmaster, "Not mad, master Perrins? I reckon that if you had

seen him, with the foam at his mouth, when he turned up the lane, you would be of another mind; if ever dog was mad, he was!"

Here Norbury took a hearty draught at the porter pot.

"And so say I," said the butcher, "never did a madder dog run on four legs; but we have done for him."

"There can be no doubt at all about the dog being mad," cried the farmer, "but mad or not mad, he is harmless enough now."

"If the dog really was mad," replied the schoolmaster, "he must have been driven mad by the mischievous prank that was played him. I have made it my business to inquire into the matter; and I find that the poor animal was lying, quietly enough, half asleep at widow Perkins' back door till some unlucky lads tied a tin kettle to his tail; then he set off, sure enough, like a mad thing,

but had he been left to himself, all might have ended well; just, however, as he had got rid of the tin kettle the cry was raised, 'A mad dog!' and then the poor thing was hunted to death."

The farmer, the shepherd, the wheelwright, the shoemaker, the butcher, and the blacksmith, looked at each other, for they believed every word that the schoolmaster had spoken, and Perrins thus went on:

"We are too apt, my good neighbours, to believe in every idle report, and to join in persecuting the miserable; I am sorry for poor widow Perkins, it is not more than three years ago that her son, as honest a lad as ever was born, got a place as footman in a gentleman's family. The gentleman was robbed, and some evil disposed person spread the report that young Perkins must be the thief. He was turned away, every body shunned him, and driven to distraction by want, and reproach, he at last became

a thief in reality, and a month ago was transported. It was found out, when too late, that Perkins was innocent of robbing his master; but that did not signify, he had a bad name given him, and that occasioned his destruction, just like the poor dog that you have all hunted to death.

"Let these things be a lesson to us all, that we may be more careful how we join in reports that may be spread by slander, and in cruel persecutions, that may lead to the destruction of either man or beast."

The farmer and the shepherd walked away, the wheelwright and the shoemaker took their leave, the butcher and the tailor's apprentice went off together, and old Norbury, the blacksmith, once more entered his smithy, leaving the meek and merciful schoolmaster alone with the exciseman.

BLINDMAN'S BUFF.

I love to ponder o'er, and praise,
My childish sports, my boyish days,
And move in thought once more among
A happy and light-hearted throng.

I HAVE played at blindman's buff twenty times over, but of all the games in which I ever took a part, that was the most delightful one in farmer Broomfield's kitchen one Christmas eve.

The tea things had been carried out of the parlour, the plumcake had disappeared, the green cloth was replaced upon the table, and the candles were snuffed, when a party of us drew our chairs round a blazing Christmas fire.

The wind blustered round the house and roared up the chimney.

It was a keen frosty night, and old Carlo lay with his legs stretched out upon the hearthrug; I suppose he was dreaming, for he kept moving his feet, and the muscles of his mouth, in such a droll way, that it set us all laughing. Sitting still, however, did not exactly suit a great many of us, and a warm discussion arose about the game at which we should play. Some one proposed "forfeits," but we could not all agree to forfeits; those who preferred turn the trencher were ordered to hold up their hands, it was evident that turn the trencher was not quite the game to please all.

"Well, my boys and girls," said the farmer, "what do you think of a game at blindman's buff in the kitchen? We all clapped our hands in loud approbation of the farmer's proposal, jumped up from our seats, and bustled one after another into the kitchen, followed by old Carlow, who had been roused out of his sleep by the clamour.

'Mid sterner care's engrossing power
How sweet it is, surpassing measure!
To witness boyhood's happier hour
Of vacant mirth, and guileless pleasure!

Never was a duchess prouder of her drawing room, than Betty was of her kitchen: it had been dressed with holly the preceding day; in the middle of the mantel-piece stood an ornament made of holly and ivy, with strings of red berries threaded together; in the centre of it was placed a large rosy-cheeked apple, and the ivy was flowered all over. There was a sprig of holly in every window pane, two or three boughs over the shelves and dishes, and from the middle of the ceiling hung a large bunch of mistletoe.

The benches were soon piled one upon another, the settle moved into a corner, and a spotted blue handkerchief folded in readiness, but the question who should be buff first, was not easily decided. Some thought the youngest ought to be blinded first, but the youngest would have it that the eldest should set the example.

At last the important question was decided by our drawing lots, and the lot fell upon Tom Turner.

The handkerchief was, accordingly, bound over his eyes, and we all became as mute as mice, treading on tiptoe. Never was such a blunderer as Tom Turner, he blustered about, knocked his elbow against the table, and ran his head against the wall, he put us all to the rout and we felt sure he would not be buff long. Such a scuffle took place when Harry Pearson was caught; half-a-dozen of us had got behind Tom Turner, who was groping in a corner out of which

somebody had just escaped, when, feeling a pull behind, he suddenly made a rush backwards; we all tumbled one over another, two or three scrambled away upon their hands and knees, I snatched the corner of my jacket out of his hand, making my escape, and Harry Pearson who had fallen down upon all fours, caught hold of the leg of a bench to help him up, when down came a pile of benches upon the floor. Tom Turner tumbled over them, and lay sprawling upon Harry, who was fairly caught, and blindfolded, in spite of all he had to say.

Harry was exactly the reverse of Tom Turner, for instead of blundering about, he was afraid to move, and cut a comical figure crouching along half double, stretching out his arms, and holding up his head to peep, if possible, under the handkerchief; he would start back half a yard, if any one called out danger! Many were the tricks we played him, one in particular I remember caused no small confusion. Hearing a titter behind the

settle, where three boys had secreted themselves, he cautiously groped his way towards it, when one of the boys stepped softly up, and breathed upon his hand, while another cried out fire! fire!

Harry snatched away his hand, stumbled backward in a fright, upset a coal box full of cinders, knocked down a chair, and dragged a brass footman, which had caught in his trousers, half way across the kitchen. He at last, however, succeeded in grasping Fanny Simkin's frock, Fanny pulled, and scuffled, and swung round and round, to no purpose, for Harry would not let go his hold. She called out, "You can see! you can see!" but he bawled out her name, and tore the handkerchief from his eyes.

Fanny with her hair all in disorder, breathless, and boisterous, was obliged to have her hands held while the handkerchief was tied on.

O what a laugh we had at her, when she

followed cousin Jane Simkin, who had screwed herself up behind the kitchen door!

Fanny stretched out her arms to catch her, but Jane slipped under them, and Fanny clasped a thrum mop, which was stuck up behind the door, exclaiming, "Now I have you, Miss, by your curls!" We all burst out laughing, Fanny let go the mop, and lifted up the handkerchief to see what it was.

When, ripe for pleasure, youthful folks
The streams of joy are quaffing,
What little things, what trifling jokes,
Will set them all a laughing.

I was caught next, and a pretty bustle I made among them. After groping about for some time, the sound of their footsteps got lower, and shortly after there was a profound silence. I stood still, determining to rush forward in some direction the moment I heard any noise. I suppose my attitude, standing in the middle of the kitchen with my head on one side listening attentively,

tickled some one who could hold out no longer, for there was a suppressed laugh, as if half a pinafore had been stuffed in somebody's mouth.

I rushed towards the spot, and never sure was there such a pushing, scampering, and squealing. Emma Thompson's frock caught in the fender, down rattled the poker, tongs, and fire shovel. A little round table was overturned, and I don't know how many saucepans fell from a shelf.

In the scuffle, I contrived to lay hold of a jacket tail, nor did I quit it, till every one was satisfied that Frank Harris was fairly caught. He had not been blinded long, when in came the farmer, and declared that he would be buff for once, and see what he could do amongst us. The handkerchief was untied from Frank, and the farmer folded it carefully upon his knee, but instead of putting it over his eyes, he tied it round the calf of his leg, and began to run about after

us. This caused a great deal of merriment, but every one agreed it would never do, and we all in our turn tried to catch the farmer, who ran about the kitchen till he was quite tired out, and the handkerchief was untied from his leg.

Well, then, said the farmer, let us have fair play; and once more folding the handkerchief, he bound it over one eye, and jumped up. Again we all beset him, and not being able to please us at any rate, he threw the handkerchief into the air, picked up the pipe he had laid down upon the table, and escaped from his tormentors into the parlour.

We soon set to again, James Wilson, Henry Adkins, and Charlotte Summers were blinded in their turns. We made more noise than ever, down came the chairs, bang went the doors. O! I have played at blindman's buff twenty times, but of all the games in which I ever took a part, that was the

most delightful one in farmer Broomfield's kitchen. Sam Hollins had taken off his shoes, and was walking upon the table; and Charlotte Summers, who was blind buff, had caught hold of one of his legs. Tom Turner had just leaped from a dresser close by, Sam Hollins was scrambling to get away, and the pewter plates were rattling down from the shelves, when the farmer called out to us from the door, to give up our game unless we preferred giving up our mince pies. Just then the clock, by the pantry door, struck eleven; the knot in the blue handkerchief was untied, we seated ourselves round the supper table, and enjoyed the mince pies almost as much as we had enjoyed our game at blindman's buff in farmer Broomfield's kitchen.

BELLEVILLE SCHOOL.

Bonny Belleville! bonny Belleville! I can think upon thee yet,
And many a year will pass e'er I thy pleasant scenes forget;
Thy summers and thy winters all may in their turn depart,
But their record still is graven on the tablet of my heart.

BELLEVILLE school was delightfully situated, and when the morning sun shone on the grove of chestnut trees, gilded the church

spire, and was reflected from the winding brook, a more lovely scene was not to be gazed on.

Many a lighthearted girl received there that instruction which made her the ornament of her domestic circle, and added to the happiness of her future days. There the ignorant were informed, the timid encouraged, the bold reproved, the vicious punished, and the virtuous rewarded.

What has a young person to do with pride! pride may make all around it uncomfortable, and excite a great deal of angry feeling, but it can never render its possessor happy. Many a pretty face has been spoilt, for a short time, by being rubbed over with blackberries, but a little clean water has made the face as beautiful as before. This is not the case when a countenance is disfigured with pride, for neither cold nor hot water will penetrate more than skin deep, whereas pride is rooted in the very heart.

Of all the young people at Belleville school Arabella Clarke had the most pride. She was indeed unbearable. No one could discover half the beauty or half the cleverness which she saw in herself, though none of her companions could deny that she had a fair face, and a tolerable understanding.

Arabella Clarke was sixteen years of age, and had nearly finished her education; every hour of the day she gave herself airs, nor was there a young person near her, whom she had not displeased, at one time or other, by her insufferable pride. It was a common saying, "You are as proud as Arabella Clarke;" and no circumstance gave the school girls half so much pleasure, as an opportunity of mortifying their vain companion.

Now it happened that a grand spectacle was to be seen in the park, and every one expected that the place would be thronged with fashionable people. A few of the elder

girls of Belleville school, were permitted to attend, and as the park was at some distance, a coach was ordered for the occasion. Arabella was foolishly determined to outdo her comrades, and for this purpose she borrowed, of a friend, a very handsome feather.

With this feather stuck in her hat, she walked about among her companions, giving herself more airs than before, and ridiculing the less showy bonnets of those around her. Pride ought always to be mortified, and it generally is. Two of Arabella's schoolfellows made up their minds to punish her for her ill behaviour, and, before the coach drove up to the school, they contrived to pin on the back of her pelisse a paper with the following inscription:

"Miss Wiggins lent her the feather."

Little suspecting the trick which had been played her, Arabella skipped into the coach, and in a short time alighted at the park,

which was thronged with company. Scarcely had she proceeded a dozen yards, looking about her with an air of self-satisfaction, before she heard a titter, while some one whispered loud enough for those around to hear, "Miss Wiggins lent her the feather." Arabella, believing that one of her companions was the whisperer, turned round, with a frown, and saw a whole party laughing. "I wonder who Miss Wiggins is?" asked one of them, provokingly. "I cannot tell that," replied another, "but you see Miss Wiggins lent her the feather."

Mortified at these remarks, Arabella hurried on to get away from the ill mannerly people around her, but wherever she went a laugh reached her ear, and the provoking observation, "Miss Wiggins lent her the feather."

The higher you shoot an arrow into the air, the deeper will it sink into the ground when it falls, and in like manner the prouder

a spirit is, the deeper shame and humiliation it has to endure when humbled. Arabella Clarke was stung to the quick. "Look, look," cried a young man fashionably dressed, "what do you think of that, Tom? Miss Wiggins lent her the feather." "I wish Miss Wiggins would lend me one," replied his companion, "but what necessity is there for the whole world to be told of it?" "A well dressed young woman," said a fat gentleman, as he passed her. "True, my love," replied his wife, who turned back to look at her; "but Miss Wiggins lent her the feather."

In pushing among the crowd, to get out of the park, the paper fell from Arabella's pelisse, but not before fifty persons, at least, had repeated in as many different tones, "Miss Wiggins lent her the feather."

Arabella with a flushed face, a heavy heart, and a wounded spirit, reached the school, without ever suspecting the cause of her mortification.

The stratagem had succeeded so well, that the two girls who had contrived it, determined to resort to it again, if Arabella did not conduct herself in a more affable and humble manner.

Bad habits are not easily overcome, and in a short period Arabella became as unbearable as she was before.

About this time Arabella, and the two schoolfellows, who had played her the trick in the park, set off to a little village at no great distance.

The pride of Arabella had led her, on this occasion, to put on a pair of pink silk stockings, that she might be smarter than her companions.

Now these silk stockings had a large hole in one of the toes, which she had neglected to mend. Her schoolfellows being aware of this circumstance, laid their plan accord-

ingly; and when they arrived at the entrance of the village, under pretence of arranging Arabella's shawl, they pinned a paper to it written as follows:

"She has a hole in the toe of her stocking."

There happened to be a merry making in the village, so that a throng was gathered together. Two or three rude lads who had observed the paper came up to read it, and one of them cried out, "She has a hole in the toe of her stocking." This was immediately repeated by the rest, and half a dozen young ragamuffins hooted out at once, "She has a hole in her stocking."

Poor Arabella reddened up to her very ears, for she was too conscious of the fact, not to apply what the boys said to herself. By turning however into a shop she escaped from her tormentors. Her two companions made some excuse to leave her by herself. When she came once more into the street a

butcher cried out to another on the other side of the way, "Bill, lad, she has a hole in the toe of her stocking."

Arabella hastened on extremely mortified, and yet wondering how it was possible for any one to see that the toe of her stocking was out of repair. As she crossed the market place, the jeering of the country fellows, the laughing of the women, and the hallooing of the lads were intolerable. "What a pity it is," said one, "that such fine stockings should have a hole in the toe!" "What is the matter?" cried another. "O nothing at all," said a third, "she has only got a hole in the toe of her stocking." The uproar increased, and Arabella was half dead with vexation and fright, when she joined her companions, humbled to the very dust, she caught hold of them to support her, and burst into tears. The paper, unseen by her, was unpinned from her shawl, and thankful was Arabella Clarke to escape from the mortification she had endured.

An obstinate malady requires strong medicine, and nothing but such complete humiliations as she had endured, would have corrected the insufferable pride of Arabella Clarke.

In course of time the whole school became acquainted with the tricks which had been played Arabella, and the extreme mortification they had drawn upon her. Their proud schoolfellow became more humble, affable, and amiable; for whenever she manifested the accustomed pride and haughtiness of her disposition, she was immediately rebuked by an allusion to the past. "Though her hat did look smart in the park," one would say, "*Miss Wiggins lent her the feather.*" "And if she does toss up her head," another would reply, "yet, for aught I know, *she has a hole in the toe of her stocking.*"

THE HAILSTORM.

The clouds have been dark in the heavens ;
The storm in the market has been ;
The folks are all sixes and sevens,
And now, not a soul can be seen.

It was on a market day that the principal street of a country town was so crowded with stalls, wheelbarrows, baskets, farmers, children, cattle, and old women in red cloaks, that a chaise boy who had been hallooing to

the crowd till he had lost all patience, lashed his horses, and drove on, to the great confusion and dismay of the whole throng.

Mrs. Mason, the carpenter's wife, who was gossiping with an old friend, caught hold of her little boy, who was filling his pockets with gingerbread at a stall, and dragged him on the causeway. Molley Mayors snatched up her butter basket, and declared that she was as near being run over as fourpence was to a groat; and farmer Reeves kicked a spaniel dog out of the way, when nobody would have given the toss up of a halfpenny for its life. Though the hallooing of the chaise boy had little effect upon the people, they were nimble enough in their movements a quarter of an hour afterwards.

The town clock had struck twelve exactly five minutes, a drove of black cattle had passed through the market, and Farmer Reeves had just looked up at the dark clouds over his head, and ejaculated to Timkins,

the Turner, who was buttoning on his great coat, "It is coming, however," when down came one of the most tremendous hailstorms that ever peppered against a house top.

There came a dark cloud,
The wind blustered loud,
And the rain, too, was not very quiet:
The hail rattled down
All at once on the town,
And the market was all in a riot.

The whole town seemed taken by surprise, every body appeared struck with the same thought, at the very same moment, and surely never was such a scene of running, scampering, and putting up of umbrellas. The first care of all the people evidently was to take care of themselves, however anxious they might inwardly be for the welfare of their neighbours. Rain poured down with the hailstones, and such a storm was hardly remembered by the oldest person in the market.

Betty Saunders had taken out of her basket a couple of fine chickens, and was

assuring an old lady dressed in black, that such another couple she would not find in the market; the old lady had just felt the weight of them, holding them up by the legs, and shook her head at the high price asked by Betty, when down came the storm. The old lady could not, for the life of her, get out the crooked pin which fastened her umbrella; the hail and rain beat sadly on the back of her neck, and soaked the blond round the edge of her bonnet. Betty Saunders put a blue handkerchief over her head, holding the two corners of it in her mouth. While she stooped down, to settle her basket, the fowls and chickens fluttered about, the ducks tumbled out of the basket, quacking, and flapping their wings; the wind blew under Betty's cloak, and puffed it out like an air balloon, one corner of the blue handkerchief flapped in the wind, and down rattled the hailstones into her basket.

Doors were clapping, windows flapping,
Dogs were barking loud and shrill;
Panes were jingling, fingers tingling,
Not a soul was standing still.

James Davis, the gardener, was filling a quarter-peck measure with potatoes, out of one of his donkey's panniers, and Mrs. Gibbons from the cheesemonger's shop, stood holding her apron to receive them. Farmer Brown had just led his mare and old green gig out of the stable yard at the Cross Keys; Mrs. Brown had told the landlady where to put a bandbox, tied up in a white handkerchief, and was standing on tiptoe, to see if her basket and umbrella were safe in the gig, when the storm came on. Mrs. Brown and the landlady bustled back into the inn with the bandbox, Farmer Brown turned his willing mare toward the stable again; and Mrs. Gibbons ran into her shop, with her apron full of potatoes, and a bunch of carrots in her hand. James Davis threw a hair cloth over his panniers, pushed for shelter into a crowded entry, and his donkey stood stock still with her head hanging down, her tail clipping close to her hind legs, and her long ears, dripping with wet, lying flat down upon the back of her neck.

Just opposite the coal wharf, a crowd of people were gathered round an old man, in a ragged coat, and slouched hat; he held a bundle of papers in his hand, and was bawling out, "a last, dying speech, and confession," at the same time turning about, and moving at a very slow pace. Two men, who were unloading a waggon of coals, stood listening to hear the conclusion of the dying speech, and the old man had raised his voice louder than before, to assure them it was "all for the low price of one halfpenny!" just as the storm began. The crowd was instantly dispersed in different directions, the old man quickened his pace towards an entry, a little girl scampered up the street, with a dying speech in her hand, and the men in the waggon dragged two coal bags over their backs; a horn sounded, and the mail coach rattled up the town at the time, the horses smoking, panting, and peppered with hailstones; the outside passengers, and even the guard, though he had five capes to his coat, had quite enough of it, and the coachman

was right glad to pull up at the Green Dragon.

Widow Jones, at the turnpike, was holding the gate open with one hand, and receiving three-halfpence with the other, from a gentleman on a black horse. A driver, in a fustian jacket with boots, splashed up to the knees, had just thrown the bridle upon the neck of his horse. His horse had thrust his nose, nostril deep into the trough opposite the Red Lion, and was coughing in the water, when the hail and rain began to pour down. The gentleman, at the turnpike, stuffed the ticket into his pocket, that Mrs. Jones had given him, stuck his spurs in the side of his nag, and set off at full gallop. Mrs. Jones let go the gate and escaped into the house. The driver pulled his horse's head out of the trough, with the water dripping from his mouth, and seemed in a much greater hurry than his weary beast, to overtake a drove of oxen, who were indulging themselves in a very slow pace up the turnpike road.

Nancy Perkins and her mother were standing at the door of a mercer's shop. Dame Perkins was bidding Nancy look at a dark blue gownpiece, instead of the light print she had fixed her heart upon, and was assuring her it would be most "sarviceable." Two ladies, dressed very gay, stood looking at some shawls in the other window. A lad was standing by a wheelbarrow, holding his hat for half a pint of nuts, and Captain Tonks had just pulled up a spirited horse opposite the hotel, when down came the hailstorm. The captain sprang out of his gig, seized the reins of his horse, and endeavoured to turn him towards the hotel yard, the hailstones beat in the horse's face, he tossed up his head, showed his teeth and the whites of his eyes, and ran backwards with the gig. The captain was in a passion, the horse plunged and capered about, the hostler ran out of the stable, the lad took to his heels with his hat full of nuts, Dame Perkins pulled the hood of her cloak over her head, Nancy's patten-string broke just

as she was crossing the gutter, and her best Sunday gown was splashed up half a yard high.

Near the market house a flock of sheep were standing staring and looking as if they did not know which way to go. At the top of the street stood a lad in a blue frock, with a whip in his hand, talking to a boy who was sitting upon the handle of a wheelbarrow; a little farther down a young gentleman, in white pantaloons, was shaking hands with a stout old gentleman on a gray horse, and Mrs. Tibbins, the huckster, stood talking to a neighbour at the back door, when the sudden storm came down.

The lad, in the blue frock, smacked his whip, and ran hallooing down the street, the sheep scampered off, spotted and splashed up to their necks. The gentleman, on the gray horse, hoisted an umbrella over his head, turned his horse short round the corner of the street, and gave a hasty nod to his friend

in the white pantaloons, who at three strides on tiptoe reached a confectioner's shop. Crash went a window pane at the huckster's, the hail and rain beat in upon the butter and eggs; Mrs. Tibbins screamed out to her daughter, a dog ran yelping by the door, the gutters overflowed with water, and still the hail came rattling down.

Now let us turn to good account
  The tale that has been told,
For it may yield us moral wealth
  As good as glittering gold.

We see, where darkness gathers round;—
  Where troubles have begun,
How different mortals, when distrest,
  To different shelters run.

Then if our theme we ponder well,
  This moral must arise,
Go seek amid the rudest storm
  A shelter in the skies!

PALM SUNDAY.

He sat in his old oaken chair all the while,
Indulging his favourite employ,
And talk'd of the customs of old, with a smile,
When his grandfather was but a boy.

WHO would not walk twenty miles with a pack on his back, any day, to witness the observance of a good old English custom! The manners of our forefathers are fading

fast away, but we should endeavour to retain such parts of the usages of olden times as are worth possessing. Come, then, if you are looking forward with hope, be persuaded for a moment to look back with consideration. It will not hurt you to know somewhat of those customs which were observed by your great grandfathers and grandmothers. We cannot get too much knowledge, if we apply it to a proper purpose.

Sellack church is pleasantly situated on the banks of the river Wye, with a hill to the south. Up this hill is a pathway so steep that it appears, as you look at it from the river, to lead up towards the clouds. It is pleasant to see the beams of the morning sun gilding the weathercock, and glittering on the running water as the ferry-boat crosses the river.

There are a few excellent monuments in the church, and whether at the dawn of day or at eventide, Sellack wears such a retired

and peaceful appearance, that the stranger is insensibly drawn to muse amid the gray stones of the burial ground.

In the neighbourhood resides a clergyman so corpulent and infirm that he rides his horse, on a Sunday, not only to the churchyard but into the church, straight along the middle aisle up to his pew door: at the end of the service the horse again enters the church to take back his master.

But it is not the church, nor the river, nor the ferryboat, nor the rising and setting sun; neither is it the churchyard, nor the corpulent clergyman, nor his horse, that you are called to reflect upon. No! It is on the old English custom which is still kept up at Sellack on Palm Sunday.

On the square tablet of benefactions fastened against the wall inside of the church, it is recorded that the sum of five shillings per annum was left by one of the Scudamore

family, to be expended in cake and ale by the parishioners on a Palm Sunday. The intention of this bequest was to promote peace and good fellowship throughout the parish.

Now, among the ill nature, the bitterness, the wrangling and jangling that is so continually taking place in this bad world, how desirable it is that all possible means should be used to promote kindly feelings one towards another! There are thorns and briers enough in the world without our perversely planting more in each other's bosoms. He who encourages in his own heart, and in the hearts of others, emotions of goodwill to all around, is more deserving of a monument to his memory, than he who sacks a city, or conquers a kingdom.

On the afternoon of Palm Sunday, a substantial, gray-headed farmer was seen walking slowly, with a stick in his hand, down the bank leading from Baysham farm to

Sellack church. Ever and anon he turned out of the pathway to call on the cottagers by the way side, to see if they were getting ready to go to church. Farmer Jones had seen more than three-score and ten Palm Sundays pass over his head, and was going, once more, in the character of churchwarden, to distribute the cakes at Sellack church. Farmer Jones was a regular church-goer, and was generally the first to pass through the white gates into the burial ground. No sooner did he enter the church than he proceeded to the corner where he usually sat, and was in a little time joined by his two sons William and Edward. The farmer took up his bass-viol, his son William put his flute to his mouth, and Edward began to hum a psalm tune: all this time the congregation were assembling.

The old schoolmaster was teaching some half dozen children their catechism near the communion, but he soon left them to join the choir. It was not long before Eades

was seen among them, and a few other singers. Old Powell took up his parchment roll to beat time; Farmer Jones drew his bow bravely across the strings of his bass-viol; William brought out the best tones from his flute; Edward was quite in voice, and an anthem was gone through in a very creditable manner.

During the service, the young rogues near the communion, were left to themselves, the schoolmaster being engaged in the choir. When kneeling down, one little girl began to pull off pieces from the corner of her dogs-eared bible; a graceless lad opened his mouth, and tried to push the end of a small prayer book into it, while another leaned over the bench, wet his finger with his tongue, and made crosses on the broad flat stones.

When the service was over Farmer Jones took up a basket, well filled with cakes, something like cross-buns, and handed a

cake to the minister, saying at the same time, "Peace and good neighbourhood." The minister broke off a piece of the cake, and soon left the church. The honest farmer then went round to the rest of the congregation, offering a cake, and repeating the words, "Peace and good neighbourhood," to them all. It was an easy matter to do this where he felt no kind of ill will, but to offer a cake to one who was at variance with him was a more difficult piece of business.

Now it happened that Farmer Jones had had a quarrel with a neighbour of his, an old lady, about the trespass of a pig, they felt a great deal embittered one against the other, and when the farmer went round with his basket he pondered in his mind whether he should offer a cake to the old lady or not. Before, however, he got to her pew, he thought that the very custom of giving palm cakes was meant to set aside contention and angry feelings, so he determined to do his part towards a reconciliation. The old lady

had no expectation that Farmer Jones would humble himself so far as to look over the quarrel about the pig, and when he offered her a cake and pronounced the words, "Peace and good neighbourhood," her heart melted, and her angry feelings gave way. "Do you say so? Do you say so?" said she, then putting forth her hand she broke off a piece of the cake with apparently as much pleasure as if the farmer had given her a pig. Thus, in this instance, the palm cake made friends of enemies, and answered the end, which it was intended to effect, of promoting "Peace and good neighbourhood" among those who would otherwise have been opposed to each other.

After giving a cake to every man, woman, and child in the church, the worthy farmer filled a silver cup with ale, of which every one drank, the farmer replenishing the cup when it was empty.

It was a pleasant sight to see old and

young grouped together in the churchyard. Some stood in the porch; some by the stone cross; and some on the gravel walk. Farmer Jones, as he walked through them, had something to say to them all, and many a bow and many a courtesy were made to him as he slowly proceeded to the churchyard gate.

The same sum was left to the adjacent parishes of Hentland and King's Caple to be spent in cakes and ale on Palm Sunday, the custom, however, has been discontinued in those parishes, nor is it unlikely that, in a few years, it will cease altogether, but not so long as farmer Jones occupies Baysham farm. He is too fond of old British hospitality, and old British customs to abandon them. Baysham farm is the strong hold of the manners of our forefathers. The well filled cup, the abundant board, and the hearty welcome, are as necessary a part of the establishment as the chairs and the tables. Hard work, good farming, and comfort within doors, is the motto of the place.

Now as it is equally desirable that young people should live together in affection, as it is that their elders should dwell in peace, let, this account of Palm Sunday influence you in your behaviour to your companions; for the young, the old, the high, the low, the gentle, and the simple, ought universally to adopt the maxim, "Peace and good neighbourhood," throughout the world.

THE BUTTERFLY.

Who has not chased the butterfly,
And crushed its slender legs and wings,
And heaved a moralizing sigh,
"Alas! How frail are earthly things?"

WHERE is the young person who does not like to look on Harry-long-legs, as he flies about among the rushes on the brink of a pond? or to watch the green slender-bodied

Dragon Fly, with his finely woven wings, darting quickly from one place to another? or to gaze on the buzzing Bee, as he creeps up the tubes of the spotted Foxglove, or tumbles into the yellow Buttercup, always buzzing, always busy, always in a bustle? But there is something that a boy or girl loves to look on better than Harry-long-legs, or the Dragon Fly, or the buzzing Bee, and that is a Butterfly. There is something so beautiful, so odd, so holiday-like in a Butterfly, that every one likes it, every one loves it.

> Fluttering it waves its pinions fair,
> By turns to rise and fall;
> Now on a flower, now in the air,
> Now o'er the garden wall.

Bob Hardy, Bill Piper, and Harry Willets were playing together on the common. They had been hopping over each other's hats, skimming flat stones across the pool to make ducks and drakes, and chasing each other round the sawpit, when all at once a beau-

tiful Butterfly came fluttering just over their heads. It was not one of the common yellow-winged Butterflies, which may be seen every hour on a summer's day, but a large one with broad wings, painted, with dark brown, and red blotches; and Bob, and Bill, and Harry thought that they had never seen such a Butterfly before, in all their lives. In one minute Bill started off after it, Bob carried his hat in his hand, to knock it down; and Harry pulled off his jacket flourishing it about in the air. For some time the Butterfly fluttered about the banks of the pool, and from one side to the other of the old sawpit, at last away it went across the common, and away went Harry Willets, Bill Piper, and Bob Hardy.

Bill took the lead, and left his playmates some distance behind, but "great haste makes the less speed," and down came Bill over a log of timber. Bob passed by him, and the Butterfly just then settled on a

thistle. Bob crept softly forward, made a sudden stroke with his hat, and caught—the thistle, for the Butterfly was too nimble for him, and fluttered high in the air. Harry came up as the Butterfly came down, and flung his jacket in the air to catch it, then kneeling down on the grass he cautiously lifted up one sleeve after the other, and then the tail of his jacket; but he need not have been so careful, for the Butterfly was not under his jacket. Bill and Bob continued the chase as eagerly as if running for a golden guinea, till Harry once more overtook them, when making a stroke all together at the Butterfly, Bill fell to the ground with Bob Hardy under him, and Harry Willets on his back.

"Up again, you young rogues," cried old Hawker, the mole-catcher, who was passing by at the time with Hannah Stokes, the errand woman; "up again, for the Butterfly has got the start of you. Look yonder, he

has lighted on a rail, and will soon be o'er the hedge I warrant you."

As old Hawker said, so it was, for, before Bill Piper got to the rail, the Butterfly fluttered o'er the hedge. The prize, however, was too precious to be lost sight of, and Bob, Bill, and Harry bustled over the gate into Farmer Bunch's clover field, to pursue the Butterfly, while the mole-catcher and Hannah Stokes proceeded together along the common.

"Those lads," said Hawker, "are keeping up the old game. Fifty summers ago I used to chase Butterflies on this very common, and many a tumble have I had, and many a disappointment too. I remember a turn that Ben Holt and I had after one on the far side of the common, when Ben rolled into the sawpit; but poor Ben is under the turf now. Ben and I set off together to try our luck on shipboard; we went to South America, where the gold mines are, but we might as

well have hunted Butterflies here on the common, as any where else, for it turned out to be a butterfly chase after all, and we came back as poor as we went. Some time after that we made another start, and went to the North, having engaged to serve in the whale fishery, but the North was no better than the South. In the one we were half roasted, and in the other half frozen to death, but not a single butterfly did we catch; and I would advise all who leave old England, with the hope of bettering their condition, to think a little what they are doing. To run after riches and comfort out of old England, is just like running after a Butterfly."

"I have heard," said Hannah Stokes, "that folks who go to those outlandish countries seldom better themselves."

"You may say that," replied the mole-catcher: "many a man who has left old England in a whole shirt, has brought a ragged

one back with him, but I was going to tell you another of my pranks: When Ben and I found that so little was to be got at sea, we determined to stick close to the land, so we made the best of our way up to London. I dare say you have heard, as well as we did, that the streets there are paved with gold, and the houses filled with lords and ladies, but we found going to London pretty much like going to the North and to the South. It was at best but a chase after a butterfly. We saw plenty of tall fellows in livery, with white cotton stockings, who seemed to be doing well; but neither Ben nor I were fit to be dressed up in that fashion, so we came back a little wiser than we went, but not with quite so much money in our pockets. At last we got into service, I was footman to young squire Flash, and Ben was under gardener. The young squire was a fine, dashing young fellow, sure enough; but he that runs the fastest is the soonest tired, and so it was with my master.

He ran his racehorses at a strange rate, and for a while carried all before him; but a man must not always expect the sun to shine. If he lost a hundred pounds one day, he bet another to get it back again; and when that was done, he doubled his stakes to win more while his luck lasted. It was all a butterfly chase, his noble came to ninepence, and Ben and I had once more to look out for ourselves.

"If a man gets nothing else by moving about in the world, he is sure to get experience, and they say that that will make a fool wise. Ben and I made up our minds to come back to our native place, for the farther off we went, the worse we fared. Perhaps if it had not been for this, we should have run after butterflies all our days.

"Poor Ben sickened and died, and lies buried under the yew tree, near the sun-

dial in the churchyard, but I often call him to mind now. Mole-catching is not the best trade in the world, but, for all that, it is better than running after butterflies.

"My son Jack is as much disposed to ramble as I was, but I say to him, Jack, before you start off after any thing, ask yourself two questions: first, whether it is likely you can catch it? and secondly, whether it is worth running after? for one half of the world are running after butterflies."

Here the mole-catcher and the errand woman parted, the one calling at a farm house, and the other at a cottage; but old Hawker soon after walked back again to the common, where he met Bob Hardy, Bill Piper, and Harry Willets, just returned from the chase; Bill with a scratch across his face, Bob with the crown of his hat hanging down on one side, and Harry with the sleeve of his jacket almost torn off, yet with all

their misfortunes they had not caught the butterfly.

If, reader, thou would'st virtue prize
With happiness in view;
Leave, then, the painted Butterflies
To wave their wings mid earth and skies,
And be thou diligent and wise,
And nobler ends pursue!

WASSAILING THE COW.

And there sat the Farmer, all hearty and hale,
With youth in his smile, and years on his brow:
His "Old Black Ram" was a capital tale,
"He's holt o' me now! He's holt o' me now!"

PERHAPS you have never heard of the old custom of wassailing! indeed Baysham Farm is the only place that I know of, where it is kept up.

Instead of giving the men a supper at the

end of Harvest, the harvest supper is kept at Christmas, on Twelfth Night, when the workmen assemble, and most of the young people who have the good fortune to live within two or three miles of Baysham Farm. A cake is put upon a cow's horn, and the cow's health is drunk by all the men: this is called wassailing the cow. The wassail bowl is handed round, and a merrier night is not passed in all Herefordshire, than the night of the harvest supper at grandfather Jones's of Baysham Farm.

What an excellent thing it would be if young people could always manifest moderation in their mirth, and so conduct themselves that present pleasures should not be purchased at the price of painful retrospections. Why should a happy heart lay up sorrow for a future hour? But I am moralizing, instead of describing, as I intended to do, the ancient custom of wassailing the cow.

I will describe the wassailing just as it took place, when, with a merry heart, I

mingled in the busy scene some years ago. The plumcakes and the tarts were made the day before; and early in the morning the house was all in a bustle. Aunt Sarah was up to her elbows in flour, making mince-pies; Nanny busy in the kitchen; Molly bustling in the dairy; some running one way, and some another, all in a hurry, heating the oven, rubbing the chairs and tables, cleaning knives and forks, getting wood for the fire, cutting bacon, and plucking poultry. About four o'clock the young people began to arrive; now a gig stopped at the door, and now a cart was seen coming down the lane.

Never shall I forget old Dinger trotting up the farmyard with a cart nearly full of merry young people from the hill of Eaton, all talking at the same time, and tumbling out of the cart one after another. Grandfather Jones was soon surrounded by his grand-children, and uncle William had enough to do with his nephews and nieces. Seldom did a happier and a more noisy party sit

round a table, and never was there a kinder hearted old man than Grandfather Jones.

I can fancy him, now, in his elbow chair laughing at us all. It was a night of enjoyment to the very dogs! they ran among us wagging their tails, and little Jessie barked with delight at being so much noticed.

After tea we young folks took our seats round several tables for a game at cards. Aunt Betsy emptied a bag of beans upon the table, and began to count them out; but what a noise there was! Jem Loddridge wanted commerce, Tom Sire would have three card loo; some were for pope joan, and others for speculation. There was no hearing what any body said; at last we began a game at pope joan, but we were far too happy to be steady. Jem Sire was sure it was a miss deal, Ann Powell declared the pack was not right, Polly had seen the ten of hearts in the music drawer, Master Cook had but one dozen of beans instead of two, Miss Cook took up her hand and began

to play, young Will Jones called out ace of spades and that's a stop, Harry Powell bawled out fair play, while others knocked on the table, and entreated for silence. They might as well have entreated the wind not to whistle; the clamour became louder, some were talking, some laughing, some playing, others scrambling across the table, and two or three were groping upon the floor after their beans.

At the next table not a bit more order was preserved: nobody could be heard, though all of them spoke as loud as they could.

In the midst of the uproar, the report of a gun was heard at some distance from the house; this was a signal that the twelve fires were lighted in the stubble piece; down went the cards, the pope joan board was overturned, the beans rattled about, and the chairs were pushed back; the boys snatched up their caps, and scampered off to the fires; and the girls tumbled, one over the other,

up stairs, and crowded round the windows. Eleven of the fires were burning, and just as the tall one in the middle blazed up, three guns were fired off, and the men shouted, Mr. Jones for ever!!

When the fires were nearly out, the boys ran into the house and bolted all the doors, the men were not to be admitted till they had sung, so, after rattling the latch for some time, to no purpose, they all burst out singing, and the doors were opened.

Soon after the wassail bowl was brought into the parlour, and set in the middle of the round table; and a song was called for.

A song! a song! come, Uncle Ned,
And Uncle William you,
We must have "Abercrombie," ay!
And "Death of Nelson" too.

Uncle William, who is, I am sure, one of the best singers in the county, then gave us the famous song of the death of Abercrombie, while Aunt Sarah filled up the glasses with *punch* out of the wassail bowl, and Aunt

Betsy cut two plates full of plumcake. Jem Mayers, the fiddler, was then called up into the parlour; he took his seat in a corner, put the fiddle under his chin, and began to scrape and to screw it into tune: the chairs were soon put aside, and we tripped away.

So light the foot, so light the heart,
They seemed to act a mutual part.

We were short of partners, and it was proposed that one of the girls should wear a fur cap, to distinguish her as a gentleman, but no sooner did the laughing girl put on the cap, than aunt Betsy, who loves a joke, knocked the cap off her head, which caused so much laughter and confusion that every body got out of place, and the dance was given up.

Just then we heard a great bustle in the kitchen, and ran out to see what was going on. We might well hear a bustle, for the men were driving the Alderney cow into the kitchen, it having turned out a very wet

night. We all got upon the tables to see the cake put upon her horn; the kitchen was crowded with men, women, boys, and girls; even old Mrs. Andrews was hoisted upon the table.

When the cake was stuck upon the cow's horn, the men shouted, standing all round her with their cider mugs in their hands.

"Here's to thee, Violet, and to thy white horn!
May thy master and mistress have good crops of corn,
Both wheat, rye, and barley, and all sorts of grain!
If we live till next year we will drink to thee again."

Poor Violet stood quietly enough till old George threw a drop of cider out of his mug in her face, she then tossed up her head, down fell the cake, the boys scrambled for it, and Violet pushed her way through the crowd, and was set at liberty.

If you could have seen the supper tables set out in the kitchen, you would never have forgotten it. Of all busy scenes in

the world none can excel a harvest supper! Aunt Sarah cut up the fowls; Aunt Betsy carved the harslet; the servants ran about with dishes, and the young folks handed plates to the men who sat all round two long tables: then came the mincepies baked in large dripping pans.

It was a laughable sight to see Mr. Powel, of Hill Eaton, vainly trying to cut up a pie placed on a little table. We all crowded round him, pushing our plates over the pie, and each trying to get a piece. Mr. Powel stood laughing, with the knife and fork in his hand, begging us to stand back, for he could not even see the pie for plates.

We then had our suppers in the parlour; and afterwards returned to our amusements.

> Some to forfeits, some to cards,
> And some for romps were ready;
> In vain Aunt Betsy called aloud,
> Mischievous boys, be steady!

An old man in the kitchen sang "the

laughing song." He stood upon the table and made such droll grimaces, that we all laughed as loudly as he did, and the kitchen rang again with merriment.

There was no such thing as going to bed: towards morning some of us lay upon the sofa, and some upon the floor; but not a wink of sleep did we get,

> And sad it was the group to see,
> At breakfast, in their places,
> With tangled hair, half-opened eyes,
> And drowsy, pallid faces.

Some of the youngest of the party were nearly asleep over their breakfast, and Aunt Betsy, who sat at the top of the table making coffee, looked as drowsy as the rest.

Very reluctantly did we shake hands with grandfather Jones, and the hospitable inhabitants of Baysham farm. As we returned home we talked of our past pleasures, and anticipated the next harvest supper, for we

looked forward to Christmas all the year round.

Grandfather Jones is still at Baysham with his son William. Long may he live there, as happy himself as he wishes every one else to be! may his latter days be days of peace, and prosperity continue to smile on Baysham Farm!

THE NARROW FOOTPATH.

Give me, amid this selfish world,
That heart, where'er it goes,
That warmly beats for others' joys,
And bleeds for others' woes.

If I were to be asked what vice is the most common among mankind, I should reply directly, the vice of selfishness. It rules the actions of the young, and it reigns in the

hearts of the old; the boy with his marbles, and the miser with his money bags are alike subject to its control. Sometimes it shows itself openly, at others it puts on a hundred disguises, but whether it be hidden, or exposed, it contrives to find its way into every bosom.

> The beggar, whining at the door,
> The miser with his pelf,
> The high, the low, the rich, and poor,
> Bow down and worship self.

But though you might look for a whole summer's day before you could find man, woman, or child, that is not selfish, still every one exclaims against this vice as though it were an object of general abhorrence. Every one abhors selfishness, and yet every one puts it in practice.

If you regard a crowd passing along the street, every being is wrapt up in his own affairs, every one consults his own convenience. It is true that when one man meets

another he makes way for him to pass, but this is done not to oblige the person he meets, but to accommodate himself; we see twenty men move on one side for those they meet, but not one of the twenty will stir an inch from the path to accommodate those who are walking behind them.

The other day, in passing along London streets, I came to a place where the road was sadly out of repair, it was indeed a complete puddle, so that the only way for the foot passenger to get by, was to walk along a narrow footpath, and I could not help stopping ten minutes to observe the instances of selfishness which attracted my attention.

In the middle of the narrow footpath a man sat upon his wheelbarrow, eating a piece of bread and bacon, to the great annoyance of the passengers, who were obliged to press between the wheelbarrow and the

wall. The man thought of no one in the world but himself.

"These fellows, with their barrows, are always in the way," muttered a short square man, with a yoke across his shoulders, from which hung two cans filled with water to the brim. Now the man, with the water cans, cared no more about the convenience of others, than the man with the barrow; for in pushing carelessly by, he spilt the water into the shoes of a woman carrying a market basket. The woman said it was very odd that people could not mind what they were about, but while she looked at her wet shoes, the corner of her basket struck a little sweep, who was passing, in the eye; the sweep put both his hands to his face and set up a squall, falling back against a smart young man in a white waistcoat. The young man, mortified with his appearance, drew back suddenly that he might get into a by place to arrange his dress, but in so

doing he nearly overturned an old fat gentleman walking with a stick. The old gentleman went on, however, moving as slowly as a broad wheeled waggon, though a lad who had a letter to put in the post office, in a hurry, was behind him vainly endeavouring to pass.

At this moment an officer rode by, but, though the road was so dirty, he did not slacken his pace, and thus, by his ill-manners, splashed the mud over a lady dressed in white, and a country lass in a pink gown. Sally was very angry, and the lady very indignant; but the lady thought nothing of Sally's pink gown, and Sally cared not a mushroom for the lady's white clothes.

All this time the fellow with the wheelbarrow sat unconcerned eating his bread and bacon, and turning those into the muddy road who could not stop to take their turn in passing: at last he stood up. Two little children, each eating a piece of bread and

treacle, in getting by, pushed their dirty fingers against the white trousers of a sailor, while another jack tar, who had taken an extra glass of grog, set his foot against the wheelbarrow and overturned it at once into the muddy road, thereby preventing a waggoner from passing with his waggon.

"Hollo!" cried a chaise boy, who drove up with a chaise at the moment, "move your waggon out of the way, blocking up the road in this manner."

"I wish you would put your great, ugly barrow somewhere else," cried the waggoner to the owner of the wheelbarrow; who roared out in his turn to the sailor, "What business have you to overturn my barrow, Mr. Bluejacket?"

Now here were men, women, and children, all incommoding each other, and thinking only of themselves. The fellow with his wheelbarrow, the man with his water cans,

the woman with the market basket, the little sweep, the young man in the white waistcoat, the old gentleman with the stick, the lad with the letter, the officer, the lady, and the country girl, the children eating bread and treacle, the sailors, the chaise boy, and the waggoner had every one of them been incommoded; but not one among them cared for the misfortunes of the rest. Now if you suppose for a moment, that you are free from selfishness, I would advise you to read over again, the catalogue of calamities of the Narrow Footpath.

THE DANCING BEAR.

It was when the apples and pears were ripe,
Bob Wilkins ran light as a feather;
For the man and the bear, and the tabor and pipe,
Had drawn a whole crowd together.

A VERY little thing is enough to set the inhabitants of most country villages in a bustle, and this is especially the case with the village of Hopfield. Of all tattling, scandal-talking places, surely this is one of the worst; if a secret is whispered at one

end of the parish, in the morning, it is as sure to be known at the other end before night, as if the common crier had gone round with his bell to proclaim it. There are but few of the good people of Hopfield, let them be ever so industrious, who cannot afford to gossip an hour with a neighbour; but when any thing extraordinary occurs, such as a chaise and four driving through the place, or the entrance of Punch's show or a group of Dutch broom-girls into the village, the inhabitants are all sixes and sevens; not a cottage contains its owner; children flock together from all quarters; and mothers, long after the marvellous sight has disappeared, recount it, at their back doors, to such of their unhappy neighbours, as were not fortunate enough to be spectators of the strange phenomenon.

It was on a warm autumnal evening that Peggy Mullins, who had been darning a gray worsted stocking at her door, hastily cut off the end of her worsted, and sticking the long *needle in* her shawl, leaned over the wicket

gate to see where her neighbour Joe Willis was running so fast, with half a dozen lads at his heels. They were soon at the bottom of the village; but though Peggy could perceive a great crowd of people opposite the blacksmith's shop, neither she, nor Mrs. Williams, next door, who stood staring with all her eyes, could ascertain the cause of it.

For some time before this, Peggy Mullins had heard a dull, heavy sound, thumping in her ears, and could not, for the life of her, make out what it could be.

In a few minutes, however, the crowd gave way, and a man, dressed in a cocked hat and loose great coat, carrying in one hand a long staff, and with the other leading a shaggy brown bear by the chain, advanced slowly up the middle of the road, followed by, at least, half the population of the village, some of whom, more cautious than the rest, kept at a respectful distance from the muzzled bear, who strode lazily along after his master.

A half starved looking stripling marched by the side of the bear, with a tabor and pipe, and so heartily did he blow the pipe, and so lustily did he beat the tabor, that it excited a strong disposition among many of the spectators to shuffle with their feet as though they were dancing.

The man leading the bear looked hard at the houses as he passed by, but did not make a stand, till he came opposite the Red Lion, which is the only public house in the village; then, clearing a circle in the crowd, he shouted to the bear, who immediately reared up on his hind legs; he then brandished the staff over the head of the animal, making him move round sideways, forming a circle the full length of the chain. While the bear awkwardly lifted up his uncouth legs in obedience to the command given him, the keeper took off his cocked hat, and placed it on Bruin's head; this much amused the spectators, who laughed immoderately at the droll figure before them.

The old man, who belonged to the bear, used such strange expressions, and had such a comical cast of countenance, that he was almost as great a curiosity as the animal he exhibited: altogether his visit to Hopfield was a very pleasant affair to the people of the village.

Now it happened that a clever ventriloquist, who was on his way to a neighbouring town, had called at the Red Lion. Much entertained, not only with the bear and his master, but also by the wonder and amazement of the crowd, which he had observed from a window of the inn; he resolved, by way of joke, to exercise his skill as a ventriloquist, little doubting that if he could once make the people believe that the bear could speak, he should soon be able to spread alarm and confusion among them.

Accordingly he mingled in the throng, and waited for an opportunity to put his scheme in practice.

Just as he came up, the keeper called out to the bear, in a very harsh voice, commanding him to hold the staff which he presented, at the same time flirting the chain and ordering him to lift up his head. Bruin hugged the staff with his forepaws, and uttered a growl, which made some of the people who stood nearest to him shrink back. Scarcely had he again commenced his rounds when the ventriloquist told the stripling to stop his tabor and pipe for a minute or two, and walking up to the bear called out, "Well, my old boy! and what country do you come from?" A voice appearing to proceed from the bear, gruffly replied, "From the Alps in Germany." It would be idle to attempt any description of the amazement of the crowd; they stood gaping with wonder, while the keeper seemed more surprised than any of them; for, lifting up his large eyebrows, and opening his wide mouth, he stood as though his feet had taken root in the ground.

"And can you speak English well?" said

the ventriloquist, again addressing the bear. "As well as you can," was the reply. At this moment the crowd began again to shuffle a foot or two further from the bear, whom they regarded with fear as well as wonder.

"And how have mankind used you?" shouted out the ventriloquist. "Most cruelly," replied a growling voice, "and now I will be revenged on you all." At these words the ventriloquist turned round and ran as if for his life; the horrified keeper gave a jerk to the chain which brought down the bear so suddenly on his feet, that all around doubted not the animal was about to spring upon them. O the scene of consternation that took place at that moment! the whole throng of spectators, without waiting a moment to deliberate, rushed back in the greatest terror. Hats, bonnets, handkerchiefs, and shawls, fell to the ground; and the affrighted people, conceiving that in another moment they might be torn in pieces, took to their heels in all directions, bawling, screaming,

and spreading out their arms as though they were wings to aid them in their flight.

Ned Taylor pushed among the crowd pell-mell, and was over a stile hard by in a brace of minutes; but old fat Nanny, who could hardly make a run of it, shuffled along in the greatest fright imaginable, feeling sure that if any one was overtaken by the bear, it would certainly be herself.

Young Barnett ran some distance like a greyhound, but his toe caught a stone, and down he fell on all fours. At any other time he would have yelped at such an accident, like a cur that has been kicked, and blubbered for ten minutes without quitting the place, but the fear of being devoured gave him wondrous powers of endurance, and surprising dexterity in helping himself, so that he was presently upon his legs again, setting off at full speed without stopping to rub the dirt from his breeches knees. Poor old Humphrey Stevens thought it was all over

with him, for his lame leg kept him far behind the rest: he hobbled along with all his might, and would, willingly, have given his Sunday red waistcoat to be safe in his own house. Peggy Mullins had not ventured near enough to the bear to know the cause of the general consternation, but no sooner did she see her neighbours run in all directions, than, without stopping a moment to inquire, she made towards the cottage with as much expedition as if she had been shot at, tumbling up the broken stone steps, and bustling through the wicket gate in such a flurry, that, as she afterwards declared, she knew no more what she was about than the man in the moon.

The joke of the ventriloquist soon got abroad, and many a hearty laugh it occasioned. Some of the villagers were surprised that any body should have been foolish enough to be frightened; others said it was enough to frighten the boldest man in England. One wondered at his neighbour, and another was astonished at himself.

The landlord, of the Red Lion never fails to tell the tale of the dancing bear to every stranger who enters his front parlour; but though the landlord and his guests, and all the inhabitants of the village of Hopfield believe that it was the ventriloquist, and not the bear, that threatened revenge; old Gammer Griffith, at the thatched cottage, near the mile stone, is of a different opinion. She had read in her almanack, that about the middle of June, three days before or three days after, something remarkable would happen, and I question if the writer of the almanack were to appear before her, whether he could persuade her to believe that the prediction had no allusion to the dancing bear. Whenever the affair is spoken of she shakes her head incredulously at the tale of the ventriloquist, and says, it may answer people's ends to hush up the matter, but, for her part, she knows "what is what," and that so sure as her name is Margery Griffith, the village will again be visited by the dancing bear.

THE HEAVY CROSS.

Though heavy the burden on thy back;
Though hilly and rough the road;
A cheerful eye, and a hopeful heart
Will bid a thousand cares depart,
And lighten every load.

Robert Hodgkins had lived in the village, next door to Samuel Hullins, at least a dozen years, and no doubt the two neighbours would have been on good terms together;

but, unluckily for the peace of Robert Hodgkins, Samuel Hullins had a pension on account of a bad wound which he received when fighting as a seaman under Admiral Nelson at the battle of Trafalgar. Every week when Hodgkins went to pay his rent up at the tanhouse, he muttered and grumbled all the way there and back, because his neighbour could afford to pay his rent so much better than himself. An envious, discontented spirit is one of the worst qualities a man can foster in his bosom; it makes him miserable at home and abroad; it sours his sweetest enjoyments; and plants stinging nettles in all his paths.

For a time Hodgkins growled and grumbled to himself, but afterwards his discontent grew louder, till, at last, it became his favorite topic to lament his own ill luck, and to rail against those whose money came in whether they would or not, and who had nothing else to do but to sit in an easy chair from morning to night, while he worked

his heart out to get enough to support hi family.

It was on a Monday morning that Hodgkins, who was sadly behind in his rent, walked up to the tanhouse to Mr. Starkey's, to make some excuse for not paying up what was due, when he met his neighbour Hullins, who was as regular as clockwork in his weekly payments. The very sight of Hullins was as bad as physic to Hodgkins, who, as he nodded his head in reply to Hullins's salutation, looked as surly as a bull about to run at a pointer dog.

Hodgkins entered the tanhouse, and was soon reproved for not paying his rent by his landlord, Mr. Starkey, who told him that his next door neighbour, Samuel Hullins, regularly paid up every farthing. "Yes, yes," replied Hodgkins, "some folks are born with silver spoons in their mouths; Hollins is a lucky fellow, no wonder that he can pay his rent with such a pension as he has got."

"Hullins has a pension it is true," said Mr. Starkey, "but he carries a pretty heavy cross for it. If you had lost your leg, as he has done, perhaps you would fret more than you now do, notwithstanding you might in that case have a pension."

"Not I," replied Hodgkins; "if I had been lucky enough to lose a leg twenty years ago, it would have been a good day's work for me, if I could have got as much by it as Hullins has contrived to get. You call his a heavy cross, but I fancy that his pension makes it light enough to him; the heaviest cross that I know of is being obliged to work like a negro to pay my rent."

Now Mr. Starkey was a shrewd man, and possessed a great deal of humour, and well knowing Hodgkins's disposition to repine, he felt disposed to convince him, if possible, that the lightest cross soon becomes heavy to a discontented spirit.

"I tell you what, Hodgkins," said he, "I

am afraid that you are hardly disposed to make the best of things; however, as you think that your neighbour Hullins's cross is so very light, if you will undertake to carry one much lighter, you shall live rent free as long as you abide by the bargain."

"But what sort of a cross is it that you mean to put upon my shoulders?" inquired Hodgkins, fearing that it might be something to which he could not agree. "Why," replied Mr. Starkey, fetching a large lump of chalk and making a broad cross on Hodgkins's back, "that is the cross, and so long as you like to wear it I will not ask you for a farthing of your rent."

Hodgkins at first thought that his landlord was only joking, but being assured that he was quite serious, he told Mr. Starkey that he must look for no more rent from him, for that he was willing to wear such a cross as that all the days of his life.

Away went Hodgkins chuckling within himself at his good luck, and thinking what a fool of a landlord he had got to let him off so easily from paying his rent. Never was he in a better humour than when he entered his cottage. Every thing seemed to go on right, he laughed, and joked, and seemed in such high spirits, that his wife, who well knew that he had been up to the tanhouse on a gloomy errand, could not at all account for it.

Hodgkins having seated himself with his back to the cupboard, his wife had not seen the cross on his coat, but no sooner did he turn round to pull up the weights of the cuckoo clock, than she cried out, with a shrill voice: "Why, Hodgkins, where have you been? There is a cross on your back a foot long; you have been to the public, and some of your drunken companions have played you this trick to make you look like a simpleton, as you are; come, stand still, and

let me rub it off, or every fool in the village will be laughing at you." "Let it alone," said Hodgkins, turning quickly round, "I won't have it rubbed off. Go on mending your stockings, and let my coat alone." "But I won't let it alone," replied his wife; "do you think my husband shall play the fool in that manner? No, that he shan't; I'll have every bit of it off before you stir out of the house."

Hodgkins knew very well that his wife was not easily turned when she had once set her mind upon a thing, so striding across the cottage he hastily made his escape, banging the door after him with all his might. "An ill-tempered vixen!" muttered he to himself, "I would have told her of my good luck had she been quiet, but now she shall know nothing about it."

"Halloo, Robert," cried old Fallows, the bricklayer, as Hodgkins turned round the corner, "who has been playing you that

trick? why your back is scored all across. Come here, and I will give you a dusting." "Mind your own back, and let mine alone," said Hodgkins surlily, making the best of his way forwards.

"Mr. Hodgkins," cried little Patty Steevens, the huckster's daughter, running after him, "if you please there has somebody been making a long score all down your coat; mother will rub it off for you if you will come back." "You and your mother had better mind your red herrings and treacle," replied Hodgkins, sharply, leaving the little girl wondering why he did not stop to have his coat brushed. No one else noticed the cross on Hodgkins's back till he got near the blacksmith's shop, where the butcher and the blacksmith were talking, the butcher cutting a piece of elder, to make skewers; and the blacksmith, with his arms across, leaning on the half door of his shop. "You are just the very man I wanted to see," said the butcher, stopping Hodgkins, but before

he had spoken a dozen words to him, old Peggy Turton came up in her red cloak and check apron. "My stars!" cried old Peggy, gathering up her apron in her hand, "why, Mr. Hodgkins, your back is quite a fright; but stand still a moment, and I'll soon have it off." When Hodgkins turned round to tell old Peggy to be quiet, the blacksmith roared out to the butcher to "twig Hodgkins's back." "He looks like a walking finger-post," cried the butcher. "Ay, ay," said the blacksmith, "I warrant ye his wife has done that for him, for spending his wages at the Malt Shovel." There was no other method of escaping the check apron of Peggy Turton, and the laughing and jeering of the butcher and blacksmith, than that of getting off the ground as soon as he could; so calling poor Peggy a meddling old hussy, and the other two a brace of grinning fools, he turned the first corner he came to, feeling the cross on his back a great deal heavier than he had expected to find it.

Poor Hodgkins seemed to meet with nothing but ill luck, for just before he got to the school all the scholars ran boisterously into the road, ripe and ready for any kind of fun that could be found. Hodgkins was illtempered enough before, but when he saw all the boys hallooing and spreading themselves along the road, he was in a terrible taking, expecting every moment to hear a shout from them on account of the cross on his back. This took place directly after, and fifty young rogues, full of frolic and fun, waving their caps, and following Hodgkins, shouted out as loudly as they could bawl, "Look at his back! look at his back!" Hodgkins was in a fury, and would perhaps have done some mischief to his young tormentors had it not been for the sudden appearance of Mr. Johnson, the schoolmaster, who at that moment came out of the schoolroom. The boys gave over their hallooing, for Hodgkins directly told Mr. Johnson that they were "an impudent set of young jackanapes, and everlastingly in mischief." Mr.

Johnson, who had heard the uproar among the boys, and caught a glimpse of Hodgkins's back, replied, mildly, that he would never encourage any thing like impudence in his scholars, but that perhaps Hodgkins was not aware of the cause of their mirth; he assured him that he had so large a chalk mark on his back, that it was enough to provoke the merriment of older people than his boys, and advised him by all means, if he wished to avoid being laughed at, to get rid of it as soon as possible. Hodgkins said peevishly that his back was "nothing to nobody," and muttering to himself, walked on, feeling his cross to be heavier than ever.

The reflections which passed through Hodgkins's mind were not of the most agreeable description. It was, to be sure, a rare thing to live rent free; but if every man, woman, and child in the village were to be everlastingly tormenting him, there would be no peace from morning to night. Then again, even if his neighbours got used to the

cross on his back, and said nothing about it, he knew that his wife would never let him rest. On the whole, the more he considered about it, the more was he disposed to think that the bargain was not quite so good a one, as he, at first, had taken it to be.

As Hodgkins went on towards the Malt Shovel, he saw, at a distance, his landlord, Mr. Starkey, and directly after, to his great consternation, his neighbour, Samuel Hullins, came stumping along, with his wooden leg, in company with Harry Stokes the carpenter. Now Harry Stokes was quite the village wit; and Hodgkins dreaded nothing more than to be laughed at by him, in the presence of Samuel Hullins. His first thought was to pull off his coat, but then, what would Mr. Starkey say to that? Not knowing what else to do, he took refuge in the Malt Shovel, but soon found the house too hot to hold him; for when those who were drinking there began to laugh at the cross on his back, both the landlord and landlady declared,

that no customer of theirs should be made a laughing-stock in their house, while they had the power to hinder it. The landlord got the clothes-brush, and the landlady a wet sponge, and Hodgkins was obliged to make a hasty retreat, to secure his coat from the sponge and the clothes-brush of his persevering friends.

When Hodgkins left home he intended to go to a neighbouring village, about some work which he had to do, but his temper had been so ruffled by old Fallows, Patty Stevens, the blacksmith, the butcher, and Peggy Turton, as well as by Mr. Johnson, and his scholars, the company at the Malt Shovel, and the landlord and landlady, that he determined to get home as soon as he could, thinking it better to be railed at by his wife, than to be laughed at by the whole village.

If you have ever seen, on the first of September, a poor wounded partridge, the last

of the covey, flying about from place to place, while every sportsman he came near had a shot at him, you may form some notion of the situation of poor Hodgkins as he went back to his cottage; sometimes walking fast that he might not be overtaken, sometimes moving slowly that he might not overtake others. Now in the lane, then in the field; skulking along as though he had been robbing a henroost, and was afraid to show his face. The cross by this time had become almost intolerable.

No sooner did he enter his cottage door, than his wife began: "And so you are come back again, are you, to play the tomfool! Here have been half-a-dozen of your neighbours calling to know if you are not gone out of your mind. If ever there was a madman, you are one; but I'll put that coat in a pail of water, or behind the fire, before I will have such antics played by a husband of mine; come, pull off your coat! I say, pull off your coat!"

Had Hodgkins's wife soothed him, he might have been more reasonable, but as it was, her words were like gunpowder thrown into the fire. A violent quarrel took place, words were followed by blows, and dashing, crashing, and smashing resounded in the dwelling of Robert Hodgkins.

The fiercer a fire burns, the sooner will it consume the fuel which supports it; and passionate people, in like manner, exhaust their strength by the violence of their anger. When Hodgkins found that there was no prospect of peace night or day, at home or abroad, so long as he continued to wear his cross, he of his own accord rubbed it from his back.

The next Monday, Hodgkins went up to the tanhouse betimes, with a week's rent in his hand. "Ah, Robert," said Mr. Starkey, shaking his head, "I thought you would soon repent of your bargain. It is a good thing to encourage a contented disposition,

and not to envy others, nor unnecessarily to repine at the troubles which God has been pleased to lay upon us. Let this little affair be a lesson to us both, for depend upon it, we never commit a greater mistake than when we imagine the trials of others to be light, and our own crosses to be heavier than those of our neighbours."

THE WASPS' NEST.

The wasps in their turn sallied forth on the wing,
And attacked them, and forced them to fly:
Clark, Tibbets, and Watkins, rolled head over heels,
And Brinton got stung in the eye.

It is an old remark, that we are all the creatures of habit, from the cradle to the grave. The ship boy rides upon the giddy mast in the midst of a storm, and the jockey

rides the swift racer round the course of Newmarket; but if these were to change situations, the jockey would be flung into the sea, and the ship boy would be dashed to the ground.

The sailor braves the terrors of the raging ocean, and the soldier marches to the cannon's mouth, because they have been accustomed to these things; but lock them up, separately, in a lonely situation, and they will tremble at the scratchings of a midnight mouse.

What beside habit could enable the builder to stand fearlessly on the top of a church spire, the rope dancer to balance himself safely on a slender wire, and the merry andrew to tumble head over heels, twenty times together, without inconvenience?

In the country too, instances may be constantly witnessed wherein habit enables different persons to do what others durst

not attempt. Thus a ratcatcher seizes a rat, and a sportsman a fox, which another would not touch for his life. A country lad faces a roaring bull, that would drive the lord mayor of London, and court of aldermen, before him. And a timid girl shakes, from one hive to another, a swarm of bees, which would put a regiment of Waterloo heroes to flight.

It was as hot a summer's day as had been known for a dozen years, when Harry Taylor came sauntering along the lane leading to Pike Pool with his little black terrier. Harry stopped at one time to pick up a snail-house from the bank, and at another to gather a cowslip, while his little black terrier ran about, sometimes in the field, and sometimes in the lane.

When Harry came to the gate at the top of the lane, he leaned over it, and looked first towards Broomhill, and then towards the school; at last, picking up a stone, he

jerked it along the lane, that the black terrier might run after it, and bring it back to him. No sooner did the dog see the stone bouncing along the lane, than off he set, hurry scurry, after it, as fast as his legs could go. The stone, after bouncing from one place to another, and running along the ground, rolled into a hole half way up the bank, and in a second or two, the nose of the terrier was in the hole too. For a short time the terrier scratched at the bank, not being able to get at the stone, and then once more poked his nose into the hole. No sooner, however, had he done this, than off he set down the lane, like a mad thing.

Harry Taylor whistled and called, but he might as well have whistled and called after the wind, for the black terrier, without once looking behind him, ran, as though for his life, in a straight line down the lane till he was out of sight.

Wondering what could be the matter with

his dog, Harry walked back to the hole in the bank, and soon discovered the cause of the dog's precipitate retreat. The stone had rolled into a wasp's nest, and the terrier had, no doubt, been stung in his endeavour to get at it.

At that moment, Harry heard a clamour in the direction of the school, by which he knew that the boys were out at play, so off he posted to tell them all about the wasp's nest.

In five minutes, at least, twenty of the boys sallied forth to attack the wasp's nest. Broughton said he would dig the whole nest out at once. Brinton was for filling the hole with water. Cook declared that he would tear the bank down; and Hopkins determined, in his mind, to blow up the nest with gunpowder.

But though they were all wonderfully courageous, when at a distance from danger,

their courage considerably cooled in approaching the wasp's nest. The intrusion of the terrier had put the busy community of the wasps in a bustle, and they were flying swiftly, backwards and forwards, before the hole of their nest.

Every boy cut himself a bushy branch from a tree; some put on their gloves; some covered their heads with their handkerchiefs, and all buttoned up their jackets to the very chin.

> And now they cautiously advance,
> While o'er th' embattled ground,
> With wide spread wings, and pointed stings,
> The wasps are buzzing round.

Brinton had brought a wooden bowl to fill the wasp's nest with water, but no water could be found near the place. Hopkins had his gunpowder and touchpaper ready, but he had quite forgotten to bring a lighted stick. Broughton, however, advanced in the front with a spade, to dig out the nest;

and Cook marched beside him, with a rake, to tear down the bank.

No sooner had Broughton dug his spade in the bank, than out flew the enraged wasps and attacked their assailants, who flourished their boughs and laid about them like so many thrashers. "Pull him off! pull him off!" cried Broughton, raising both his hands to his neck hole, where a wasp was sticking, after stinging him. "O my leg! my leg!" shouted Cook, throwing down his rake, and pinching a wasp with his thumb and finger, which had stuck its sting into the calf of his leg. "I am stung in the eye;" whined Brinton, screwing up his face into a most hideous shape. Hopkins, in turning round hastily, knocked down Watkins and Oliver; Tibbets and Clark rolled one over the other. A general retreat took place, nor did they consider themselves safe until they were full fifty yards from the field of battle. Hewett found a wasp on his breeches knee; Moreton

another on the sleeve of his jacket, and five or six had them on their caps.

On taking a review of the engagement, it appeared that five of them were wounded. On the part of the wasps, seven of their fraternity were killed, yet victory was undoubtedly theirs, for not only had they driven their opponents from the field, but also had the spade, the rake, and half-a-dozen of the bushy branches in their possession.

A council of war was held, wherein it was valorously determined to keep out of harm's way, and to leave the wasps to themselves. At this juncture, however, Harry Taylor volunteered not only to recover the rake and the spade, but to kill every wasp in the nest. He told them that they must wait a bit till the wasps had got settled, but that he would meet them there when they came out of school again, and if they would give him a bit of gunpowder he would

do all the rest. Harry pulled his smockfrock over his head, and stooping down fetched away the spade and rake without being hurt.

The schoolbell now rang, and pretty running and scuffling there was along the field; but no sooner did they again come out of school, than they assembled near the wasp's nest, where Harry Taylor was waiting with a lighted stick.

Harry had dug up a large turf; taking this in one hand and the gunpowder in the other, he approached the nest very quietly. The moment he put the paper of gunpowder in the wasp's nest, leaving the touchpaper hanging out, he clapped the turf over the hole, then coming back again he took his fire stick in one hand, and a bough in the other, to defend himself from the few wasps which were flying about. Setting fire to the touchpaper, he coolly walked away, say-

ing, that they would be all in a lightshine directly.

In about two minutes, the gunpowder blew up the nest, and hundreds of wasps were scorched to death. No sooner was this done than Broughton set to work with his spade; Cook began to tear away the bank with his rake; Hopkins, Brinton, and Oliver, set up a loud "huzza!" and Tibbets, Watkins, and Clark, waved their boughs, in token of victory.

"What a row they make about blowing up a wasp's nest!" said Harry to himself, as he walked away; "why, I have done that trick over and over again, and I reckon they would do it too, if the wasps had no stings in their tails; but it is as father says, without practice we can do nothing, and when we are used to it, we can do any thing."

THE SAD DISASTER.

The pothouse door is open'd wide;
The fire is bright and fair;
The guests are seated side by side,
And Jonathan is there.

WHERE is there a village without a pothouse? And where is there a pothouse that is not frequented by some cross-looking, opinionated

old man, who considers himself the king of the company? The village of Stoke has a pothouse, known by the name of the Red Bull; though it would be impossible for a stranger to gain this intelligence from the figure painted on the signpost, were it not for the large letters at the bottom, which render that clear which would otherwise remain involved in considerable obscurity. The pothouse, called the Red Bull, was once frequented by a cross looking, opinionated old man, of the name of Jonathan Grimbledon, who had been the king of the company for fifteen years, and who would, no doubt, have been the king of the company fifteen years longer, had the term of his natural life been so far extended.

The happiness of old Jonathan occupied but a small space, being concentrated in an alepot and a tobaccopipe; but, as a fountain plays the higher in proportion as its orifice is contracted, so the happiness of

Jonathan Grimbledon appeared to be increased by the limited sources whence it proceeded.

When a man has a little snug income to depend upon, he can follow out, in some measure, his inclinations, and as this was precisely the case with Jonathan, he spent the principal part of his time, with a few old cronies, at the aforesaid Red Bull. Here Jonathan and his friends assembled; when the ale was good they praised the landlord, when it was bad they abused him. Against their judgment there was no appeal, for in the study of good ale they had spent the better part of their lives. Holding their glasses up to the light they criticised its colour, and quaffing the liquid they discussed its taste; but very seldom was there an opinion held contrary to that entertained by old Jonathan Grimbledon.

Meetings at public houses, however, are not always the most peaceable things in

the world, for though some men are cheerful under the influence of liquor, others are peevish and quarrelsome; and many an altercation took place at the Red Bull. Then again, the unhealthy appearance of some of the party showed that they partook of the pains of life, as well as of its pleasures. Jonathan, when railed at by his wife, about his spending so much time at the public, usually replied, that "a man may do worse things than get mellow;" and as this was an assertion which she could not deny, so he boasted that in argument she had no chance with him. A circumstance, however, happened that turned the laugh sadly against him.

It was on a winter's evening, that he returned home, after passing his afternoon at the Red Bull, with his accustomed friends. A quarrel which took place at the pothouse had soured his temper, and having drunk as freely as he had argued, he began to abuse his wife, and to contradict his sister, a stern,

upright old lady, to whom he usually paid great respect when he was quite sober.

Seating himself in the front of the fire, on which stood a large pot of water, he stretched out his legs on the fender to receive the warmth through his woollen stockings, but scarcely had he placed himself in this position, before the coals slipped, and down came the pot into his lap, pouring its contents over both his legs. Jonathan was so confused that he scarcely knew what had happened, for he had turned his head from the fire at the precise moment when the pot fell, but, no sooner did the alarming truth rush upon his mind, than he hastily roared out, "I am scalded to death! I am a ruined man! a lost man! a dead man! O my poor legs! my poor legs!" These exclamations were accompanied with the screams of his wife and sister, and nothing could exceed the confusion produced by the sad disaster of that dolorous day.

At length Jonathan somewhat abated in his turbulent vociferations, and his wife and sister, recovering their self-possession, lifted up the legs of their patient upon a chair and prepared to take off his stockings. In this kind intention, however, they met with great opposition, for Jonathan peevishly declared that if they took off his stockings, the skin would come off with them down to his very toes.

On one side stood his sister, and on the other his wife, the one holding a bottle of goose oil, and the other a saltbox, like two physicians aiming at the cure by different treatment. The remedy of his wife did not seem to please old Jonathan, for he ceased his lamentations, and clenching his fist, told her, that if she applied a morsel of salt to his legs, he would fell her to the ground.

While they were thus employed, Jonathan groaning and lamenting, and the women

vainly attempting to persuade him to have his stockings pulled off, the servant girl, who had been out of doors for a few minutes, came in and looked with astonishment at the scene before her. "What is the matter, Mistress?" said she; but no sooner had she spoken than Jonathan, enraged at the sound of her voice, shouted out, "Enough is the matter, you careless baggage, for you are the occasion of my being scalded to death! had you put the pot on the fire, properly, this would not have happened; here am I, lamed for life, through your carelessness." "I am sure, master, you need not make such a noise about it," said Sally, stifling a laugh. Old Jonathan was here so choked with passion that he could not speak; his wife, however, spoke for him. "How dare you laugh at your master, when you see the dreadful situation he is in?" "Bless you, mistress," replied the tittering girl, "I had but just placed the pot on the fire as master came in, and I am sure that the water is as cold as ice." Jonathan's

wife and sister here dipped the ends of their fingers in the water which remained in the pot, and declared that what Sally had said was perfectly true. This astounding fact struck Jonathan all of a heap, for rather would he have parted with the skin of one of his legs than be subject to the derision which he knew would be poured upon him. He was determined not to believe the testimony of any of them, neither would he take the trouble to ascertain the fact himself. The saltbox was laid down, the bottle of goose oil deposited in the cupboard, and Jonathan Grimbledon lay, as if stretched on the rack, while he heard Sally tittering in the kitchen; his sister whispering about the extraordinary affair, and his wife mimicking his voice, and crying out, "I am scalded to death! I am a ruined man! a lost man! a dead man! O my poor legs! my poor legs!"

THE WATERSPOUT.

The winds of heaven were wild and loud,
And fierce the lightning flame
Was launched abroad from the coal black cloud,
And down the waters came.

I DARE say that you have heard of a water-spout, but as it is possible that you may not have heard of the one which I am about to describe, I will give you the best account of it that I can. It was seen when I was a schoolboy, the youngest in the school.

Since then strange changes have taken place in the village, or rather among its inhabitants. Farmer Broomfield has left his farm: Granny Ashmore, who sold us gingerbread, has been laid in the churchyard: Johnson has removed from the turnpike house; and my old master, whose frown was fearful, and whose uplifted hand was terrible as the arm of the destroying angel, in my estimation, has been consigned to the tomb.

Since then, full many a rosy hour,
And beam of joy, has been my pride;
And many a fondly fostered flower
Of early hope has bloom'd and died.

The storm has swept them all away,
And what the angry, envious blast
Has left, is but the transient ray,—
The shadowy vestige of the past.

But now for the waterspout. I am not going to trouble my head, nor yours, about what a waterspout may be, nor to enter into any learned observations on the matter, for this, if your disposition be like what mine was in my youthful days, would only make you restless and impatient. No! I

shall describe the waterspout just as it was described to me, when gaping with wonder, and my eyes sparkling with curiosity, I listened to the tale of Sherwood, the shoemaker, who then lived by the roadside, at the top of the hollow way, nearly opposite the house of Cutter, the wheelwright.

Sherwood seldom visited the neighbouring towns and villages without bringing back with him some wonderful narration or other; this rendered him a great favourite among us, for if there be one thing more than another in which a schoolboy delights, it is a good, long, entertaining story.

It was getting towards evening, when some of my playmates observed Sherwood coming along the village; a cry was immediately set up, and in five minutes Sherwood, surrounded by us all, was seated on the great stone, which had stood for many a year in the road opposite the barn.

It was very plain that Sherwood had some-

thing wonderful to relate. He had indeed walked up to our playground on purpose to communicate the surprising news.

"Never," said he, "was such a thing known in the memory of man, and what the end of it will be, no one can tell. It has been almost as bad as Noah's flood, and the folks at Bromsgrove will remember it the longest day they have to live."

"What is it that has happened?" we all exclaimed, "what is it that has been almost as bad as Noah's flood?" Here we all crowded closer round the great stone, Cox, Jeavons, Wheeler, Radnor, Cooper, Partridge, Tansley, Heeley, Dalton, and a score more. "Wait, wait, my young masters," said Sherwood, "and you shall hear all about it, to your heart's content; never since I have stitched a sole to an upper leather, have I seen so strange a sight. A waterspout has burst on the Lickey Hills, and Bromsgrove has been half under water; a barge might have swum along the streets, and the

folks were all driven up stairs, ay, and as sure as I am a living man, I thought the water would have run in at the garret windows."

Sherwood said this with so much earnestness, that not one of us doubted the fact; we listened with our mouths open, till Radnor asked him to tell us all about it. He then began at the beginning, and gave us the following account, while we stood breathless around, without once giving him the least interruption.

"Just as I was coming out of Bromsgrove," said he, "with a pair of shoes tied up in my handkerchief, hanging on my stick, over my shoulder, I saw that the sky, towards the Lickey, was almost as black as my hat; thinks I, there will be wet jackets and draggletails enough before long. As I looked at the cloud, Ashmore's broad-wheeled waggon came full drive by the Crabmill. Old Harry, the driver, on his gray pony, was lashing away at the horses like a thrasher;

he looked like a mad thing, so, when he came up, I asked him what was the matter? 'You will know all about it in a crack,' said he, hallooing aloud, without stopping a moment. 'A waterspout has burst on the Lickey, and the water is coming down, full splash, like a river.' Not knowing what to make of it, I went on past the Crabmill, while old Harry lashed away at his horses, more furiously than ever. I had not got far before I was right glad to make the best of my way back again, for the turnpike road was flooded over, and the water came driving along, sweeping every thing before it. Skipping into the Crabmill, I shut the door fast, and gave the alarm. Two or three of us ran up stairs, into the clubroom, and never did I see such a sight before. The brook, and the turnpike road, was all one stream of water. The bleaching grounds, of old Mr. King, were flooded over; and the washing house, by the brook side, was carried away. A dog was washed fairly across the wooden bridge, leading to Boarcote; sheep and fowl were swept into the Crabmill pool; and

Molly Stokes's two pigs, and her pigsty, all to pieces, were swimming by the corner of the stables.

"Thinks I, to myself, the world is coming to an end, sure enough; and the Crabmill, and poor Sherwood, and all of us will be soon under water. The sky continued as black as before, and I believed in my own mind, that it was no waterspout, but that the whole ocean had broken loose, and was about to drown us, like Pharaoh and his army, in the Red Sea.

"After waiting half-an-hour the water began to sink, and I ventured down, thinking to go to the lower end of the town, where I expected to find dozens of drowned folks, and plenty of houses, half under water. The whole town was for all the world like an ant's nest that has been stirred up with a stick, for the people were running about in all directions, as though they were mad. Cellars were filled with water, people were carrying their goods up stairs; and pails,

washing tubs, dog kennels, wheelbarrows, and rabbit pens, lay scattered in different parts of the streets.

"At last, I made my way to the churchyard, which is high enough to be out of harm's way, and there I saw that mischief enough had been done. I suppose the water was then half-a-dozen feet deep in the street. Rose's, at the round-a-bout house, looked as though it was only two stories high. Never did I see so many folks at their upper windows before. Watton, at the Upper Dolphin, was half frightened out of his senses; Haden, at the Fighting Cocks; Culwick, at the Crown; and Heeleys, at the Golden Cross, all expected their houses would be swept away, at least so I hear; and Crane, the cutler, had no doubt that half his steel things would be spoiled for ever.

"When the folks really knew that a waterspout had burst on the Lickey, it pacified *them* a bit, for they thought that the worst

of it must be over; but there will be enough for them to do this week to come, in putting things to rights, for now they are all sixes and sevens. When the water first came down the streets, the folks stared like so many throttled cats; Parson Shipley looked half-a-dozen ways at once; Dr. Woodcock was in a strange quandary; butcher Haines splashed through the water on his black mare; Sarah Holmes tried to get at her strayed washing tub; Farley, the dancing master, was as nimble as a lad of fourteen; the old clerk toddled along like a four year old; and poor half-witted Joey Kimberly was up to his middle on one side the old market-house. If any body wants to buy damaged goods and furniture, now is the time, for cartloads of them may be had at Bromsgrove. I don't know what ale they have got in their cellars, but I know very well that they have water enough there to last them all this half year to come. It is getting rather late now, or else it would do your hearts good to see Bromsgrove before the flood is gone down. As long as my name's

Sherwood, I shall never forget the waterspout, that burst on Bromsgrove Lickey."

Here Sherwood finished his wonderful narration, and nothing could we think of, speak of, or dream about, that night, but the waterspout. The next morning, you may be sure, a party of us were off to Bromsgrove before breakfast, and a pretty flood we found there.

The telling of this tale has taken me back again to the days of my boyhood, and reminded me of many a mirthful season, strangely contrasted with the cares of my after years. The last time I passed through Bromsgrove, I walked down towards the brook, and when I saw the broad mark along the wall, to commemorate the height of the waters, in the great flood, of which I have spoken, I fancied that I once more saw Sherwood, the shoemaker, sitting on the great stone, telling us all about the bursting of the waterspout, on Bromsgrove Lickey.

THE CHILDISH PURSUIT.

I tell you they are children still,
Just as they were before,
Though now their heads are six feet high,
Instead of two feet four.

If you should happen to know the village of Ashgrove, then you will agree with me, that nothing more is wanting to render it one of the prettiest places in England, than to root up the old hollow oak tree, on the green, that shoots up its leafless and barkless branches into the air, and to pull down the dirty cowhouse, near the blacksmith's shop: but, then, the dirty cowhouse belongs to a poor worthy couple, who cannot afford

to part with it; and the hollow oak tree is the delight of all the old inhabitants of the place who knew it in the days of their youth, when its goodly boughs were covered with acorns and with oakballs. No! no! the old oak must not be rooted up, and the dirty cowhouse must not be pulled down, for the aged, and the poor, have a claim on our regard, and I pity him who would trespass on their peace.

It was one of the hottest days in August. The sun blazed in the heavens, while the few clouds, which were in the sky, appeared to be hung there to prevent his scorching rays from smiting the earth too intensely. I was standing at the grocer's door, at the corner of the village, when a breeze sprung up, which was delightfully refreshing.

Suddenly, half-a-dozen lads, of different ages, burst out together from a yard, in which they had been playing, and, shouting as loudly as they could, ran along, pell

mell, one after the other, towards the village green.

Sometimes they ran on one side of the lane, and sometimes on the other, and every now and then threw up their hats and caps into the air, hallooing, hooting, and screaming, as though they were half wild.

I could not conceive what was the cause of so much commotion; their very hearts and souls were set upon something, but what it was I could not tell. My curiosity, however, was excited, and I followed them in the direction of the green. On they ran, close by the side of the pond, then they passed the sign post, and had nearly got to the ash tree, when down came Bob Turner, and over him rolled Dick Brown.

Bill Careless, Tom Stokes, Harry Stevens, and Jack Jones, however, still kept running, hallooing, and flinging up their caps. Bob

Turner, and Dick Brown, were soon on their legs again, and after their companions.

"I wonder what's up now," said Betty Parker, the errand woman, as I passed her. "I'm thinking them lads be crazy," said the old hostler of the Wheatsheaf, as he stood at the stable door, with a bridle in his hand, which he had been cleaning. But as neither Betty Parker, nor the hostler, seemed to know more about the matter than myself, I still followed the throng of madcaps across the green. Sometimes the lads were altogether, and sometimes straggling, in a long line, one after the other, then they would suddenly stop, and stare up at the sky, as though they saw something in the clouds; but though I looked with all my eyes, yet I could see nothing.

They ran so near the sawpit, that I thought every one of them would have tumbled in; but, no! they passed the sawpit, and came

to the pieces of timber which had lain on the green, ever since the fall of stockwood last year. What a yelping, and confusion, the young rogues made!

> Bob leaped, and rolled upon his back,
> While Harry was more limber;
> But Dick, and Bill, and Tom, and Jack,
> All ardent, in the chase, alack!
> Fell o'er a log of timber.

Before I could come up to them, they were once more scampering along as wild as before, till, at last, Harry Stevens caught hold of what they had been pursuing. Had life and death been the stake, they could not have manifested more ardour in the chase, and I felt very curious to know what was the invaluable prize which they had obtained. Judge my surprise, when I found that the calling, and bawling, the routing, and shouting, the rumbling, and tumbling, was all after a feather! nothing in the world but a feather!

The wind had blown it up and down, here and there, on one side and on the other side, until the happy moment when Harry Stevens was fortunate enough to get it into his possession, and, for a few seconds, he was as proud as a general after obtaining a victory.

As I turned my steps and walked towards the church, old Ephraim Jenkinson was standing at his door, leaning on his stick. Ephraim, it seemed, had not only been watching the lads, but also observing me too, though in my hurry I had not seen him before.

"A pretty wild-goose chase those lads have had," said he, "and what has it all been about? why they have made as much noise and confusion as though a mad dog had passed through the village, and have been as keenly set after something as though it was to make their fortunes; what has the hubbub been about?" "Why, Ephraim,"

I replied, "to tell you the truth, I am almost ashamed to say what it was. Concluding, myself, that it must be something very wonderful, I followed the young rioters, and after all, it turned out to be nothing more than a feather!" "A feather!" cried Ephraim, laughing, "Ah! ah! ah! ah! well; I have run after many a one, too, in my time, and almost all my neighbours appear to be doing the same thing now." "What do you mean by that, Ephraim?" said I, "What do I mean?" replied he, "why, I mean, that every man at his best estate is altogether vanity, and that nine out of every ten men in the world, are running after things as light, and of as little real value to them, as the feather which has just made such a commotion among the young urchins yonder.

"For more than threescore years and ten have I been a pilgrim and a sojourner in the land, and the longer I live in it, the

more plainly do I see that mankind are 'altogether lighter than vanity.'

"Look at our squire! he has his horses, and his dogs, and when you see him turn out on a morning, dressed in his red coat, surrounded by his friends, and servants, by his huntsmen, his whipper in, and his pack of hounds, why you might think he was about to carry the whole world before him.

"What a hallooing of the men! a dancing and prancing of the horses! a yelping and barking of the dogs! away they set off across the country like mad, tearing up the ground, breaking down the hedges, and scampering along o'er hill and valley, through bog and brake, their necks liable every moment to be broken; and all for what? Why, for as very a feather as that which the lads ran after, for what will a fox, or a fox's brush, do towards helping a man on his road to heaven? For my part, I take the lads to be

the wiser of the two, for they have about as much amusement as he has, and at a great deal less expense.

"Then look at our rector! why he has not been inside the church for these three months, and is as eager after his tenths and his tithes, wrangling and jangling with his parishioners, as if his tenths and his tithes would save his own soul. Why if he had gold enough to fill the parish church, what would it do for him by and by? 'When he dieth he shall carry nothing away.' He is running after a feather! The lads in pursuing their feather might hurt their bodies a little, but he, in the course which he takes, is injuring his own soul.

"You know that Baxter, the miller, is as rich as a Jew, and subscribed twenty pounds towards returning the member of parliament for the county; but you know also that he is a hardhearted man, and an oppressor of

the poor, and that the only reason why he gave the money was, that his name might be printed in the newspapers, and read all over the country. He can afford to give to the rich, but not to relieve the wants of the poor. He is bidding high for popularity, he is seeking to obtain a character for public spirit, while he is neglecting his private duties. Don't you think this is running after a feather? Ay, and a light one too.

"Every body knows that Sam Ferrady has passed his life in scheming, but what have his schemes done for him? He has attempted to improve a hundred things, from a steam-engine, to a tobacco stopper, and many a sleepless night has he toiled through in pursuing his whims, but, like the fisherman, spoken of in that old fashioned book, the Bible, he has 'toiled all night, and taken nothing.' Better for him, had he joined the lads yonder, on the green, for then he might have caught a feather, and kept his

property, and that would be a great deal more than he has now done.

"But it is not the squire, and the rector, and the miller, and Sam Ferrady alone, that are running after feathers; we are all playing the same game! we are all running after the shadows of time, and leaving the substantial things of eternity!

"Lads will be lads, do what you will to prevent it, and for my part, I love to see them in their pastimes. Let them enjoy themselves while they have youth, and health, and spirits. There is no harm in their chasing a feather till they are tired of the sport, but it is high time for us, who are so much older, to be thinking of other things. We ought to leave off our childish pursuits, but, instead of that, as I said before, we are all running after the light feathers that fly about on the surface of the earth, rather than seeking the solid enjoyments of the kingdom of Heaven."

I walked away from the door of old Ephraim Jenkinson, convinced that what he had said was very true; that my neighbours were pursuing vanity, and that most of us had been running after feathers all the days of our lives.

THE TITHE DINNER.

He ploughs, he sows, he reaps the land,
And acts a useful part:
I like the man with a hard brown hand,
And an upright, honest heart.

THEY tell me that one tithe dinner is very much like another; how this may be I cannot tell, never having witnessed more than one, but when I forget that one, I shall

forget how to put on my nightcap at night, and to eat my breakfast in the morning.

The vicarage, where the tithe dinner took place, is pleasantly situated at a little distance from the turnpike road. It has a grass-plot before the door, and an adjoining foldyard. On one side of it stands the church, with its lofty spire of painted shingles, rising above the fine beech trees that have been growing many a year close to the churchyard wall; a few sheep may generally be seen in the churchyard, sometimes biting off the top of the short grass, and sometimes lying with their backs against the old tombstones. On the other side is an orchard, at the end of which are two or three capital walnut trees. In spring, the parterre, leading to the house, is covered with snowdrops, and no one can be prouder of their tulips than the wife of the worthy vicar is of hers, or more industrious in weeding and watering them. The fig tree, by the arbour, now and then, produces a few figs; and the honeysuckle, that

grows against the house, is intermixed with a yellow everlasting, which has a very lively appearance. Indeed every thing about the vicarage has a cheerful aspect, and as for the vicar, he is cheerfulness itself; the poorest of his parishioners never thought him proud, and he has the good word of all around him.

The parish of the vicar is small, and his tithe payers are neither numerous nor rich, therefore, the entertainment provided at the tithe dinner is not sumptuous; plain food, and hospitality, is the order of the day.

Early in the morning of the tithe dinner-day, the vicarage was in a bustle. Molly Pullen, the charwoman, came exactly at eight o'clock, and, indeed, there was enough to do. Sally went in and out of the kitchen as though she had not a moment to spare, The vicar's wife looked as good tempered as May day, bustling about with her bunch of keys jingling by her side. Her daughters,

Mary and Sarah, were all alive, taking up the carpet, and putting things in their proper places, in the great parlour. Every unnecessary article was moved away, and even the cats took to their heels, finding such an unusual disturbance at the fire-side. In a short time, the kitchen fire was crowded with pots, and a good-sized harslet turned round upon the spit. Three dining tables were put together, in the great parlour, and two of the largest tablecloths, from the bottom of the chest, would barely cover them.

A knife and a fork, a piece of bread, and a mug, were placed on the table for every expected guest. Sally had just reached the top of the cellar steps, with two large jugs of cider, and the good vicar stood at the door, with his dog Nero, by his side, when Frank Lewis, and Will Prosser, made their appearance at the gate. They walked slowly round the grassplot, one after the other, touched their hats to the vicar, spoke a

word or two, and began scraping their heavy nailed shoes at the door, after which, they took their seats, in the front parlour, and sat quietly, for some time, looking at the fire, till Robert Turton came in, and seated himself in the next chair: it seemed a little relief to the others to have a companion, and they soon began talking.

"Queerish weather," said Turton, pulling the tails of his coat from under him. "Ay," replied Lewis, "I reckon there will be a change, for the wind is in a rainy quarter." "I came across the Ten Acres," said Turton, "and a rare bit of land it is. I never saw such a crop of barley as stood there last year. Master Parker must a' made a pretty penny on't."

"No doubt, no doubt," replied Will Prosser, "the Ten Acres, and the Willow Meadow, I take it, are the best pieces in the parish. As I come by the pumphouse, old Fallows spoke to me about them hurdles

of his. Why, says I, you had better let 'em stick in the ground till the sheep a' bit off the turnips."

Just then Thomas Cook, Benjamin Stanley, Ned Morris, and two or three more came in; they were scarcely seated, when old Eades was seen walking up the fold: he had on his best coat, red waistcoat, and brown gaiters.

"Well, Mr. Eades," said the vicar, meeting him at the door, "come in; I dare say you are tired, it is a long walk for you."

Old Eades wiped his shoes very carefully upon the mat, and putting his hat and stick quietly behind the door, took a seat beside Thomas Cook.

Turton asked Eades if he had sold his black heifer. "Ay," replied Eades, "I sold her yesterday was a fortnight to Dubbins, of the White-cross; never was a better thing

reared; her mother is eight years old, come Bartlemas day, and I never saw her fellow of the breed yet." "That pig o' your'n," said Stanley, turning to Will Prosser, "is a rare good un; what dun you give him?" "I gives him a bit o' barley flour, now and then, and he comes on tidyish like," replied Prosser, putting his hand in his breeches pocket.

"Look at Joe Winter's pig," said Ned Morris. "There's a pig for you, and never has any thing but grains and tater pillings!"

Stanley began to speak up for barleyflour, but the parlour door opened, and in came Etherd Baker, with his long blue coat, and yellow waistcoat, and Samuel Hunt, and old Addis. The last unoccupied chair was placed for Etherd, and the others seated themselves quietly in the window seat, but the vicar sent for a couple of kitchen chairs, and after a little moving and shuffling, all were again settled.

Soon after this, Michael Grove, and his son Tom, with Joe Hart, and Roger Evans, rode into the foldyard. They all dismounted at the stable door, and I would have given a trifle to have their pictures sketched. Joe Hart rode his pony, and his long legs almost touched the ground. Evans' saddle had a broken girth, and his bridle was tied with a bit of packstring. Michael's blind horse looked fit for the dogs, and, altogether, there never was such a set-out seen before.

But now dinner time came, and it was no short business to get so many comfortably seated round the table. Sally bustled about for another chair or two, and, at length, all being settled, the vicar's wife proceeded to cut up the harslet at the top of the table. At the bottom, was a large round of boiled beef, and in the middle, a fine ham, and three thumping rice puddings.

It would take more time to describe what was said and done at the table than I have

to spare. The kindhearted vicar and his wife had their eyes upon every one, and the harslet, and the boiled beef, and the ham, and the rice puddings, grew less and less, like a heap of snow when the sun shines. Roger Evans said the harslet was "mortal good." Turton declared it was "a rare prime bit o' beef." Michael Cook played a famous knife and fork at the ham; and old master Eades stuck close to the rice puddings.

Etherd Baker would eat with his large pocket knife; Samuel Hunt never took up his mug without saying, "Here's my sarvice to madam," and none of the whole party used the salt-spoons, but stuck the points of their knives into the saltcellar.

When dinner was over, and every thing taken away but the half-empty mugs, and the yellow jug of cider, the whole company drew round the fire, and Sally brought in sixpennyworth of new pipes, some wooden spittoons, and a fresh packet of tobacco. The pipes were handed round, and the par-

lour was very soon as full of smoke as it could hold.

The vicar drank their health, and that of their families, hoping that they would all prosper, and be blest in their basket and their store, in their going out, and their coming in. The cider mugs went round, and wheat, and barley, and turnips, and horses, and cows, and pigs, and sheep, were talked of in their turns. All agreed that the times were not what they ought to be; that the taxes were too high, and the price of grain too low, and that something or other must be done for the farmer. Turton told, over again, the tale of the ploughing match, where his father gained the silver cup, though he had related it regularly at every tithe dinner for the last five years. Addis talked of the hogsheads of cider, which his grandfather had made, in one year, from one orchard; and old master Eades said, that he could plough, sow, reap, and mow, a matter of twenty years before half the folks that now lived in the parish were born.

While they were smoking, and talking, and drinking cider, a tray was brought into the parlour, according to an old custom, that a collection might be made for Sally, the servant. There was a deal of fumbling, and slipping pieces of money one over another, inside their pockets, at last a silver shilling was laid on the tray. Some gave sixpence, and some gave threepence, but Etherd Baker pulled out a penny and put it in the tray. It is true that he tried hard to find another, but though he dived to the very bottom of his breeches fob, turned one of his waistcoat pockets inside out, and shook the long tails of his coat, it was to no purpose, for when there is no money in a pocket, all the fumbling and shaking in the world cannot get any out. Sally, in counting her treasure over in the kitchen, found herself, to her great delight, a richer woman by five shillings and sevenpence than she was before dinner.

About eight o'clock the worthy vicar retired into the other parlour, where he was

followed by the company, one at a time, to pay up the tithe that was due.

The good vicar shook them all by the hand; his wife pleasantly desired to be remembered to their families; Sally, with a courtesy, thanked them for what they had put in the tray, and officiously helped them to find their hats and sticks; Michael Grove mounted his blind horse; Joe Hart, with his long legs, almost walked on to the back of his pony; Roger Evans tied up, as well as he could, his broken girth. The gate, at the end of the fold-yard, was closed, as the whole party retired to their several habitations; and the kind-hearted vicar, as he walked up stairs, talking to himself, was heard to say. "Well, I hope they have all been comfortable; that peace and good will may reign among us, and that at the great day of account it may, through mercy, be said to us all, Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

SNOWBALLING.

Come leave awhile the cheerful fire.
And forward blithly go,
And boldly brave the wintry blast,
And the pelting hail and snow.

If I were to talk from Monday morning to Saturday night about my schoolboy-days, I should, after all, say little, compared with what might be said on such a subject.

The different seasons, as they roll, all bring pleasure to the schoolboy, who suits his pastimes to the varied scene. The buoyancy of his spirit, controlled during the hours of school, bursts forth with increased ardour, when he sallies forth into the play-ground in quest of happiness. The fetters of study are broken, the prison door of the school is flung back, and the light-hearted captive, wild with joy, gives way to all the turbulent emotions of the heart. It is of little consequence to him whether the flower of Spring, or the fresh foliage of Summer adorns the earth. He cares not if the fruits of Autumn abound, or the snows of Winter are abroad. Wet or dry, shine or shade, within doors or without, he is never destitute of amusement. He has a marble to shoot, a hoop to trundle, a ball to throw, and a kite to fly.

But though the schoolboy has ever some pleasant pursuit to occupy his play hours, never has he a lighter heart, nor a more cheerful spirit, than during the frosts of

winter, when the ponds are frozen over, and the fields, around, are covered with snow.

It was early on a Winter's morning, while we were yet in bed, and before the bell had rung to call us up, that Harry Stokes, who had been down stairs a little earlier than usual, came again into our bedroom with the welcome intelligence, that the big pool would "bear all over." This news seemed, at first, too good to be true; when he assured us, that he had ventured on to the middle of it, without hearing one crack, we began to think all was right; but when he said that he had stamped on the ice, close to the flood-gate, and found it "firm as a rock," we shouted for joy, and, jumping up in bed, tried which could dress himself first to slide upon the pool.

In a little time we were as happy, ay, happier than kings, for Sanders had bor-

rowed a besom from Hannah, the housemaid, and had swept away part of the snow. The ice was as slippery as glass, and we had a slide from one end of the pool to the other.

What a pity it seems that happiness should not last for ever! but, so it is, in the brightest day every earthly object casts a shade, and seldom, either among boys or men, is an hour of unalloyed pleasure to be enjoyed.

> E'en on the bank of freshest green,
> Some ugly creeping thing is seen!
> And where are fairest roses found
> Without a thousand thorns around?

In the middle of our sport, Croxall, one of the biggest boys, began, as usual, to tyrannize over us. At one time he made a hole in the slide, at another he threw snowballs at the least among us, and every now and then he tripped up the heels of those who were not quick enough to get

out of his way. Most of us hated Croxall, for he gave us every reason to dislike him. To love those who oppress us, is a hard lesson to learn in youth, manhood, or old age.

As it was the day on which we had our half-day's-holiday, it was agreed that we should all go to the Rocky Meadow, and have a good game at snowballing. This is one of a schoolboy's hardiest amusements, and, when engaged in with good temper, one of his very best pastimes.

No sooner were we liberated from school, than away we scampered to the Rocky Meadow, so called, on account of three or four sharp pointed cliffs which rose in its centre to the height of about twenty feet. This meadow was a favourite place of resort in our play hours, and many a game at French and English, did we there engage in, and many a storming party, of young heroes,

made an attack on those who had possession of the rocks.

There were about forty of us in all, and being equally divided, two captains were appointed. Croxall was one of these, and Crowe the other, and luckily for me I fought under the gallant Captain Crowe. A hard struggle took place to get possession of the rocks, and it was full a quarter of an hour before our noble captain, and his brave little army, were safely, and victoriously posted on the cliffs. It was famous fun!

The day was clear and bright, and though the snow was dry, it made up very well into snowballs. Never had boys a heartier pelting than we gave each other that day!

On the middle rock there was a sort of breastwork, or projection, behind which we were perfectly secure. We could pelt our opponents without being struck by a single

ball. Then again, there was on each side of the breastwork a narrow road down the rock, so that we could descend, in force, on which side we pleased, attacking our enemies at a disadvantage, and sometimes taking a prisoner. It was really famous fun.

At one time our hands were cold as ice, at another burning and tingling; but whether they were cold or hot, in pain or out of pain, it did not matter, for we kept on peppering each other without intermission, and fought with as much ardour and determination as General Elliott himself, when he threw red-hot balls from the rock of Gibraltar.

We had exhausted all the snow in the post which we occupied, and had moved out of our strong hold that we might be better provided with ammunition, when a determined attack was made upon us, and the war raged fiercer than ever. It was, indeed, capital fun!

Up to this time the contention had been of the most friendly kind, and peals of laughter were continually heard as we plastered each other over with snow; but, at length, Croxall's cruel and tyrannical disposition began to manifest itself. Every time an opportunity occurred, he pulled one of our party by the leg from the rock, and not only rolled him in the snow, but used him in a cruel and brutal manner. This went on, till, quite exasperated by his cowardly conduct to those who were so much younger than himself, we hastily determined to stand by each other in punishing him for his tyranny. Our plan was to descend from the rocks, in a body, and to contend with no one but Croxall, however much we might be pelted. There was not one among us a match for Croxall, singly, but, all together, we could do with him what we pleased, and we knew very well that his own party hated him too much to render him, in such a case, any hearty assistance. "Now, my brave lads,"

cried our captain, leaping down from the rocks, "follow me!" With a hearty good will we did follow him, and never were soldiers, in a field of battle, more resolutely determined to humble a proud foe, than we were that day.

Croxall came forward to meet us, but we spared him the trouble of coming far, for in a twinkling we were round him like a swarm of bees. In five minutes we so plastered him with snow, that you might have mistaken him for a snow man. Never was poor fellow so bepeppered and bepelted before, for his party delighted to see him well punished, and gave us but little molestation.

But though Croxall had received so many favours at our hands, we had not pelted away his cruel disposition, for no sooner had he cleared away the snow from his face, head, neck, and bosom, than he ran savagely at Crowe, who was much less than

himself, and throwing him down, began to pull his hair and his ears in a brutal manner. In a moment we made a general attack to rescue our fallen captain, more than ever determined to pay off Croxall in his own way; no quarter was given him; when he bawled aloud, a snow-ball was dashed into his mouth; when he turned round to look for his companions, his "daylights" were darkened with another volley. In vain he became furious, and pinched and struck every one that he could lay hold of, for we cared not what we endured, so that we could crow over Croxall. Lester showered on him a double handful of snow, which ran down his back, inside his shirt. Collis rolled up what he called a ten-pounder, and threw it with both his hands, right against his bosom. Pinnock pounded him on the back, and Morley plastered his sides. Poor Croxall was fairly conquered. No sooner did he get the snow out of one of his ears, than dash came a well aimed ball into the other.

Never was better fun in the world! At last we tied two handkerchiefs round Croxall's arms, above his elbows, as he struggled with us on the ground, and linking hands, away we set off round the Rocky Meadow, dragging him along on his back. He writhed, and kicked, and bawled, and squalled, but it was to no purpose: on we went, hallooing and laughing, every now and then stopping to inquire if he felt "quite comfortable?" We did not let him once rise from the ground till he had faithfully promised never again to tyrannize over any of us; and so exhausted, and ashamed was he when set at liberty, that he slunk away, as chopfallen as a man who has stood an hour in the pillory, and been pelted with addled eggs.

Where Croxall may now be I cannot tell, but the peppering he got that day is not likely to be forgotten by him. A cruel, tyrannous disposition is bad enough in a boy, and if we pelted it out of him, and

prevented him from practising it in his manhood, we rendered him a kindness for which he cannot be too grateful; however that may be, we did our best to correct him, and never did we enjoy better fun than in snowballing one another, and crowing over Croxall in the Rocky Meadow.

THE HARD TASK.

I love to go back to the days of my youth,
And to reckon my joys to the letter,
And to count o'er the friends that I have in the world;
Ay, and those who are gone to a better.

Of all the men, I have ever yet known in the world, my uncle united the greatest degree of cheerfulness with the sobriety of manhood. Though a man, when I was a

boy, yet was he one of the most agreeable companions I ever possessed. He knew how to be merry and wise, and when with him, I always felt in the company of a playmate, a protector, a counsellor, and a friend. He had seen much of mankind, and could play his part as a man among men, though he condescended to act as a boy among boys. I loved my uncle, and I know that he loved me, and some of my happiest hours were spent in his society. Many a joke have we enjoyed, many a pleasant ramble have we shared together, but our jokes and our rambles will no more be repeated.

He embarked for America, and nearly twenty years passed by, before he came back again. I was the first to meet him on his return, but O, how altered did he appear! The cheerfulness of his youthful spirit, and the strength of his manhood were gone; he was in every sense of the word an old man: his body and his mind were enfeebled, and

second childishness had come upon him. How often have I bent over him, vainly endeavouring to recall to his memory, the scenes we had shared together! and how frequently, with an aching heart, have I gazed on his vacant and lustreless eye, while he has amused himself in clapping his hands, or in singing, with a quavering voice, a verse of a psalm! But he is dead; my hand closed his eyes, while his daughter and his granddaughters knelt around him; and I gazed on his coffin, when placed in the noiseless vault.

It was not my intention to be melancholy, but we cannot think of those whom we once loved, and who are now removed from us, without regret. I have shed a tear, my heart is relieved, and now I can be cheerful.

In one of those pleasant and playful seasons, when my uncle shared the pastimes of my brother and myself, he undertook to bind us hand and foot together. This was soon

undertaken, but not soon accomplished, for my brother and I were lively as larks, wild as March hares, and as fully determined not to be bound, as he was to bind us. Away we scampered with my uncle at our heels; we led him such a dance, in the house and out of the house, up stairs and down, from the attic to the cellar, that he soon heartily repented of the task he had undertaken. At last he caught me, but this only increased his difficulties, having to drag me after my brother, who ran off like a lapwing. You may be sure that I gave him all the trouble I could, sometimes holding by the doors, as he pulled me through them, and sometimes clinging round his legs, to prevent him from moving. My uncle was, however, determined to do what he had undertaken, and though he found me very troublesome, at last he succeeded in catching hold of my brother. Victory now seemed to be on the side of my uncle, but my brother struggled so bravely, that one hand was not enough to master him, and the moment my uncle

loosed me, I set off at full speed, leaving him no other advantage than that of having exchanged his captive. How I did laugh, at a distance, to see my poor uncle take out his pocket handkerchief and wipe his brows!

The struggle and the chase began afresh; the chairs were overturned, the tables pulled out of their places, the doors opened and banged back again, the boxes dragged about, but still I remained at liberty, uncaught and unconquered. My heart beat rapidly, my legs ached with exertion, I panted for breath, and my cheeks were as red as a cherry.

Now it happened that there was a flight of steps leading out of one of the cellars into the yard, so that I could run down one pair of stairs into the cellar, and up another into the yard, thus was I enabled, repeatedly, to make my escape.

In vain was every changing plan,
To check my course and bind me;
I ran and laughed, and laughed and ran,
With my uncle far behind me.

But though I had the advantage in speed, my uncle had it in prudence, and a prudent head is, at any time of day, worth half-a-dozen pair of light heels. Unknown to me, he had bolted the door fast, at the top of the cellar steps, and soon after he chased me to the other entrance. Not doubting that I could escape as usual, I darted down the steps, with my uncle at my heels, pulling my brother along with him; but when I had ascended on the opposite side, to my dismay the door was fast, and before I could descend, my uncle was at the foot of the stairs. There was then no hope of escape, and in a few minutes my brother and I, tied together hand and foot, were dragged up the steps into the yard, bathed in perspiration, and as hot as if we had been baked in an oven.

My uncle was as much exhausted as we were, and declared, that of all the tasks he had ever taken on himself, this had been the most difficult. "I cannot tell," said he, "what I may yet be called on to perform,

but I will never, in my sober senses, undertake again to bind together two such rude rebels as you are, so long as I live."

Often since then, when engaged in enterprises beyond my strength, have I called to mind the determination of my uncle.

THE ALARM.

Hark! hark! I hear a fearful sound,
That bids my bosom thrill;
Though loud the night wind whistles round,
That shriek is louder still.

It was on a dark, rainy night, about the middle of March, that I returned, after a long ramble, to *Fawley Court*, one of the most hospitable mansions in Herefordshire.

Weary, and wet to the skin, I took up a bed-candlestick to retire to my chamber and change my clothes.

I crossed the great hall, paved with broad flat stones and hung with pictures, and ascended the oak staircase, while the wind howled around the mansion, and the rain beat against the projecting windows.

Scarcely had I taken off my coat, untied my cravat, and pulled off the boot from my left leg, when a violent scream, as from a person in great distress, reached me. I listened a moment, the scream was repeated, and, fully persuaded, in my mind, that the life of some one was in danger, I snatched up my chamber candlestick, and without waiting to put on my coat and cravat, rushed down the oaken staircase to the door leading to the garden. Hastily withdrawing the great iron bolt, I pulled open the door, and was in an instant in the garden. The rain pattered on my head, and a blast of wind

blew out my candle. It was in vain to go forward, for the screaming then appeared to proceed from the opposite end of the house, I therefore retraced my steps, making the best of my way to my chamber. To pull on my boot, to put on my coat, and to descend the staircase, was the work of a few moments; but during that time I heard the shrill screams of a female, as in extreme distress. By turns I thought that robbers had beset the house; that murder was being committed,—in short, I was half wild with anxiety to get to the spot whence the cries proceeded. At the bottom of the staircase I met a young friend, a visiter, like myself, at Fawley Court, equally anxious to discover the cause of our alarm. The screaming continued, and I fancied the cry of murder was uttered in a half suffocated voice. We both ran along the great hall, and entered the sitting parlour, which we found empty. On we went to the servants' kitchen, not a being was to be seen. With increased anxiety we rushed forward into the court-yard towards the stables, and there met a

number of servants, who had all been to render assistance, but could not find whence the screams proceeded. The wind had blown out their candles, so, stepping back into the servants' kitchen, I procured a lantern, and hastily putting a lighted candle therein, once more hurried off in the direction of the stables. It was fearfully dark, the rain poured down, the blast was shrill, the casements shook, and the sound of hasty feet rattled on the pavement of the court-yard. All this time the screams were faintly heard, but owing to the rain, and the wind, and the darkness, no discovery had been made. In the fold-yard I met the squire with some of his friends, who, having heard the cry of distress, had sallied out with precipitation, to ascertain the cause. We were all alike horrified by the continued screams, and I was wound up almost to a degree of desperation. I insisted that the cries came from the fold-yard. The squire was equally positive that they proceeded from the garden, and the servants were of half-a-dozen different opinions. Never was alarm, consternation, and

dismay, more strongly depicted on human features than at that moment. One of the housemaids was absent, and we had no doubt that the screams were uttered by her.

As the wind in fitful blasts was loud or low, so the cries were faintly or distinctly heard.

This description given when the day is calm, and the sun brightly shining in the skies; or even at night, when a family group are gathered round the fire, is not likely to leave that impression on the mind which was made on ours. You must fancy yourself to be in an ancient mansion, in a lonely situation; you must remember that the gloom of night rendered all objects difficult to be descried, and therefore liable to be mistaken for others; you must imagine the consternotion of every face; the fear, the foreboding, the agony of every heart; and you must hear, amid the fitful blast of the hollow wind, the wild shrieks that reached our ears, before you can form a true conception of the state of our minds.

Alarm was painted on every face,
And terror in every eye,
As the wild wind whistled around the place,
And rose that wilder cry!

A sudden thought struck the squire, who hurried forwards, followed by us all. The moment he opened a door leading to the vaults below, the screams burst loudly into the hall. Following the squire in a posse, we descended into the cellars, and there at once discovered the cause of our alarm. It would be difficult to describe our emotions at that moment; we all expected some desperate or fearful scene, but we were not prepared for the sight before us. Suddenly the screams, which had subsided, were succeeded by a hearty laugh from the squire. There was poor Mary, the housemaid, pressing her hand against the brass cock of a cider cask, for, in drawing the cider, she had dropped the brazen key, and had no other means of preventing the cider from running on the floor than that of pressing her hand against the brass cock. In this awkward position, fearing to stir from the

cask, she had remained nearly half-an-hour, screaming for assistance in vain. The key used in drawing the cider, turned round a little projection on the top of the brass cock, and when it was lost, Mary had not strength to turn round this projection with her fingers. She had closed the two doors at the top of the cellar steps, so that her screams were faintly heard in the hall, while a cellar window, leading towards the fold-yard, occasioned her cries to be more distinct and loud in that direction: the poor girl was ready to faint with the exertion she had made. The scream which I had mistaken for the cry of "*murder!*" was nothing more than the cry of Mary for her "*master!*"

During the hour of supper, and until we retired to rest, little else was talked of besides Mary, and the cider cask, and though the room rang with many a laugh, and many a joke was indulged in, neither the laughing, nor the joking, could dissipate from our minds the remembrance of the alarm, and

consternation, into which we had all been thrown.

Self-possession is an excellent quality; in seasons of apprehension, it enables us to meet real danger with advantage, and defends us from unnecessary fears, in case of false alarm. Had I possessed more of it, I should not have been so fearfully excited by the affair of poor Mary and the cider cask.

The green ivy still adorns, with its broad shining leaves, the projecting windows, and ancient battlements of Fawley Court. The flock of white pigeons wheel in rapid circles around the place; the large chesnut tree blossoms by the pond; hospitality is exercised to all; every wandering mendicant has his luncheon and cup of cider; and the worthy squire still reads the newspaper, with quiet delight, and smokes his pipe, in the little back room, with the good vicar of the neighbouring parish.

THE HAMPER.

See! see! here comes a hamper big,
As ever yet I saw:
O how I long to cut the twig,
And peep beneath the straw!

"A HAMPER! a hamper!" cried Charles Loxley, hastily throwing down his slate upon the table, rising in a hurry from his chair, and scuffling to the window. "A hamper?" said his sister, stretching out her neck to look over the window blind without quitting her chair. "Yes, a hamper!" repeated Charles, "and it is coming here."

Charles's exclamation was heard at the top of the house, and, in a moment, half-a-dozen feet were pattering down the stairs, and the cry of "A hamper! a hamper!" sounded from one end of the house to the other.

It is a pleasant thing to receive a letter by the postman, and still more agreeable to receive a parcel by the errand-man, but to have a hamper, delivered by the carrier, is worth more than both these put together.

Just before Charles Loxley called out, "A hamper!" a covered cart, laden with parcels, boxes, and crates, stopped at the corner of the street. The carter, dressed in a smock-frock, with a ticket stuck in his low-crowned hat, went to the back of the cart, and began to lug out a hamper, which had a bit of parchment fastened to one end of it, directed, in full, to Mr. Loxley, carriage paid. Part of a heavy crate lay upon the hamper, and the man had to lug and pull away at it for

some time, after propping up the shaft of the cart to ease an old dappled-gray horse, who closed his eyes in a sleepy manner, hung down his lower lip, and would not have regretted if all the luggage in the cart had been set down at Mr. Loxley's door. The carter was stooping with the hamper on his shoulder, and looking hard at the house, when Charles first caught a glimpse of him, and cried out, "A hamper! a hamper!"

The loud rap at the door, given by the carter, made Betty, the housemaid, drop a dish, which she was washing, into the water again, after which she bustled along from the back kitchen to the front door.

In the passage she was met by all the young people, crying out "A hamper! a hamper!" Mrs. Loxley came down stairs as the front door opened; the identical hamper was carried into the kitchen, and Mr. Loxley gave the carrier three-pence, who pulled up

his smockfrock, and put the money into his waistcoat pocket.

All this being done, the front door was again shut, and the whole family assembled in the kitchen to see about the hamper.

How odd it is, when people know how much pleasure a hamper gives, that they do not send them more frequently! how pleasant it would be to receive a letter every Monday, a parcel every Tuesday, and a hamper every Wednesday, all the year round!

After turning it about, and giving various opinions, as to where in the world it could come from, Mr. Loxley, with a smile at the corner of his mouth, proposed to unpack it the following day; but the young folks set up such a clamour, that there was no peace until he began to undo the twig which fastened down the lid. Thomas, Edwin, and Charlotte, gathered closely round, with faces

full of curiosity. Charles stooped down, and putting his eye to the side of the hamper declared that he saw—*something*. Lucy pushed her finger through the top, and was positive that she felt—*something*, and when the twig was cut off, the lid, in being raised, made such a creak, that little William caught hold of his mother's gown, and exclaimed, he was certain sure that he heard—*something*.

As soon as the hamper was opened, all pressed forwards, and when Mr. Loxley had cleared away the top of the straw, he told them, that what he felt was very soft, and very cold. Then, carefully removing a little more of the straw, at one end of the hamper a pair of long ears appeared, and two full, dim eyes. Again the young people pressed round; Charles pushed between his sisters, and Thomas bent over his father, who, in another moment, pulled out of the straw a fine large hare. Every eye was fixed with pleasure upon the hare, and as Mr.

Loxley held it up by the hind legs, one stroked it down the back, another felt its long ears, and all pitied it for being shot. It is a capital thing to receive a hamper with a hare in it! William, who had taken another peep into the hamper, clapped his hands, for he discovered four claws tied together with a piece of black tape, sticking out of the straw. "What have we here?" said Mr. Loxley, taking hold of the claws, and pulling out a brace of plump partridges. "Pretty creatures!" exclaimed Thomas. "Do let me hold them," said Charlotte. "O how I enjoy unpacking a hamper!" cried Edwin. "Look, look!" shouted Charles, as Mrs. Loxley held up a beautiful pheasant, which she had taken out of the hamper, "what a lovely bird, and what a beautiful tail he has got!"

"Well," said Mr. Loxley, turning over the straw, "this is very extraordinary; no note! not a scrap of paper to tell us from what

quarter of the globe this hamper came! but, stop! here is something very hard, take care! what can it be?"—"And very heavy too," said Mrs. Loxley, producing from the bottom of the hamper, a large sage cheese.

O it is a capital thing to receive a hamper, with a brace of partridges, and a pheasant, and a sage cheese in it!

"Well, to be sure," said Mrs. Loxley, "this is very odd! is there no letter to be found?" "Nothing of the kind," replied Mr. Loxley, taking out the straw. "I believe that we have now come to the bottom of the basket. Here is a famous piece of brown paper, which will do to light Betty's fire."

"I think I know who sent the hamper," cried Charles, "it was my uncle Beaufort, I will be bound for it." "That is not very likely," replied Mrs. Loxley, "for your uncle is now on a journey." "Then it must be

Farmer Dubbins," said Charlotte, "for I remember very well that when he was here, he talked about hares and partridges." "Why," observed Mr. Loxley, "if every one who talks about hares and partridges would send us a hamper of them, we should have more than we should know what to do with."

All this time Mr. and Mrs. Loxley were examining the straw, already pulled out of the hamper, to see if they had not overlooked a letter, or a note, but finding neither, Mr. Loxley turned over the hamper to get out the remaining straw, and the brown paper, when the latter was forced out suddenly by a shower of walnuts, which had been placed at the bottom of the hamper. The walnuts clattered against the brown paper; rolled and rattled on the quarry floor, and ran about the kitchen in all directions; tumbling, and rumbling inside the fender, and striking the legs of the chairs and tables. Charles,

Thomas, and Edwin, started back as though a set of china had been smashed on the floor; Lucy and Charlotte gave a scream; William clung to his mother; and the tabby cat sprang full two feet high, setting up her back like a hedgehog, with her tail in the air.

This sudden alarm was followed by a shout of laughter, and the young people fell to work running about, scrambling one with another, and gathering up the walnuts, while Mr. and Mrs. Loxley, after examining in vain, every bit of straw, for a letter, jokingly agreed, that *nobody* must have sent the hamper.

Betty, who was as cross as two sticks at sight of the game, well knowing that there must be plenty of plucking, and skinning, basting, and roasting; besides manufacturing sundry gravies, and sauces, muttered a wish, as she carried the contents of the hamper

into the pantry—(a wish in which the young people most heartily joined, though with a very different signification), that "*nobody would send them another.*"

FINIS.

CHISWICK:
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